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Number 29

FIRST THINGS

A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life

Creator or Blind Watchmaker?
Phillip E. Johnson

A Primer on the Devil
Walter Sundberg

The Inescapability of Metaphysics
Marion Montgomery

Maritain and the Jews
Michael Novak

Opinions and Reviews: When Shepherds Go Astray
M. D. Aeschliman on Hawthorne • Glenn C. Loury on Liberal Racism
Joan Frawley Desmond on Baptism & Development • Peter J. Leithart
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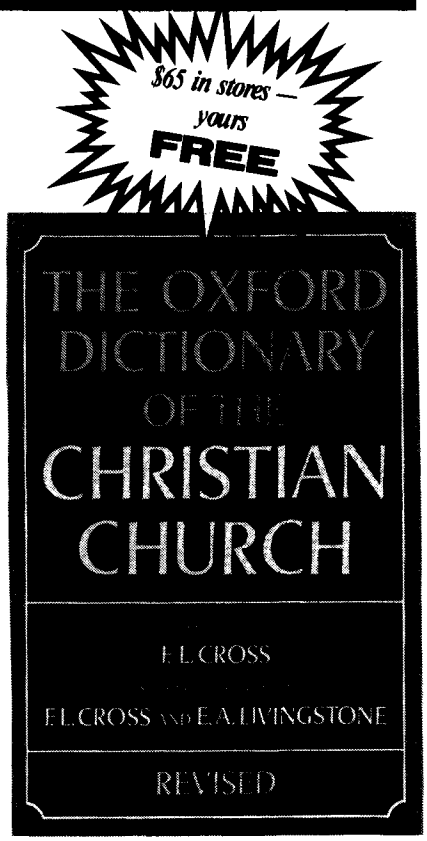

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FIRST THINGS

A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life

JANUARY 1993 • NUMBER 29

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Correspondence

Fathers and Sons in Black and White

After having read the article by Russell E. Saltzman entitled "Better Than Their Fathers" in your October 1992 issue, I'm a bit puzzled. Why did the FIRST THINGS editorial board accept this piece? Other than the fact that it was written by a Lutheran pastor, what does this article have to do with "Religion and Public Life," as FT's subtitle proclaims?

Richard John Neuhaus spends a lot of time in his Public Square section rightfully decrying the wrong side of the "culture wars." One can only conclude that the inclusion of Pastor Saltzman's article was intended to be a pedagogical tool demonstrating what happens when a religious person has allowed the relationship with his son to come to the point where the son willfully chooses that wrong side.

One wonders: has Pastor Saltzman attempted in his relationship with his son to show that his fixation on clothes as status symbol, bad music, and bad television represents a slavery to the vicious and vapid culture of modernity? Pastor Saltzman knows (or should know) that his son can be freed from this slavery by putting on the Christ that Pastor Saltzman is charged with preaching.

Pastor Saltzman asks himself why he wants to know whether a kid's name comes attached with a black or white face, implying that he has not yet overcome the oh-so-intractable racism of the white male. I hope he asks himself this question for another reason. It is unfortunate but true that much of what passes for "black culture" today is ridiculous at best and dangerously cruel at worst. It springs not from the common core of humanity that black and white people share, but from a liberal establishment intent on remaking black people into its preconceived notion of them as inherently ungovernable. Not that "white culture" is significantly better, but at least Pastor Saltzman should know which poison his son is choosing.

Maybe I have it all wrong. Maybe Pastor Saltzman isn't a victim of white guilt. Maybe he *has* valiantly striven to introduce his son to the person of Christ as an antidote to accepting the culture as it is presented. His article was short; there was undoubtedly much that was left unsaid. I have two very small children and realize that I will face the same (or even more difficult) challenges that Pastor Saltzman faces, perhaps successfully, perhaps not. I just think it's important that all of us in Christ's Church are constantly aware of the enormous stakes in the "culture wars" and of the power of our faith to tilt the battle in our direction.

Gregory W. Black
Oak Park, IL

Thank you for Russell Saltzman's article reflecting on his and his son's experiences of race relations. As a senior at an Ivy League university, I hear a lot about the problems of race in America from all quarters. There is constant talk about "proper ideology and discourse" towards the eradication of "racial hegemony," but Saltzman's article was edifying in quite a different way. He did not use the sensitive terms and abstractions of the academy; rather he spoke openly about his own reactions to racial interaction, and his inner negotiations on the subject with respect to his own son. He illustrated the day-to-day experiences of a white reacting to black culture (rap music, Malcolm X, etc.), and though such experiences may seem awkward to some, they exemplify the real power of cultural differences to divide and alienate.

It is just such honesty as Saltzman's that seems to me too often suppressed in the discussion of race, for fear of causing offense, yet to the detriment of real, personal dialogue between blacks and whites. At my college our reading lists are integrated, the cafeteria is not. Whereas students all agree on the issue in the abstract, they are unable to initiate substantial friendships. . . . We cannot talk because we do not know each

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other. We do not know each other because that would require an uncomfortable discussion of the attitudes that still set us apart.

Ultimately, as Mr. Saltzman reminds us, the issue is friendship. Even the (very important) work of the ideological struggle against racism must have for its *final* end the creation of such friendship. Indeed, we are a country perversely interested in color, yet the remedy to such perversity is not the denial of internal feelings, but a mutual, open sharing of our experiences in order that we may learn, in the midst of difficulties, how to proceed toward the goal of racial unity. Saltzman, with respect to his son, shows the proper sensitivities.

Seth White
Providence, RI

Russell E. Saltzman replies:
Let me understand: My brief opinion published last October prompted letters from two guys named Black and White? Something could be made of this, but I'll do everyone a favor and let it pass. In any case, replying first to Mr. Black, what came in season with early spring when the piece left my desk has passed with summer, such are the rapid changes in children leaving middle school to enter high school. Now the kid is into haircuts for Junior Naval ROTC inspections, spit shines on stodgy oxfords, honors classes, and, praise God, we haven't seen *Doogie-What's-His-Face* in weeks. In time, as happens to us all, the boy will find his balance. So, much has changed for his friends and him, except the friendships. Which brings me to Mr. White. The issue is friendship? Yes, I think, exactly so.

For Women Only

Concerning the continuing abortion debate in FIRST THINGS: A man's obligate role in the species preservation is a few minutes of ecstatic pleasure—period! All other involvement (if any) is voluntary.

A woman's obligate role, beyond her brief pleasure (assuming that she is not raped), is nine months of carrying and nourishing a parasitic growth which (in addition to its toll on her health) eventually practically disables her. She then "walks through the valley of the shadow" in the agony of childbirth (which is ten times more dangerous to her life than a properly done therapeutic abortion), followed by two or more years of intensive care and nursing of her offspring, plus a decade or so of decreasing, but ongoing, caring bondage.

When men can get pregnant as easily as women, and suffer the same obligate bondage involved, then—and only then—can they give valid opinions on the question of abortion.

Until then, pontificating by men [about abortion] is only a subtle but still ugly part of men's age-old domination of women. The unprovable ethereal religious notion of the "soul," spun from thin air by men (as is most of religion), has been used to justify dominion, discrimination, and unspeakable cruelties against women, witches, infidels, etc.

In reproduction, men are spooked by women, who are the real producers of life, while men are merely carriers of genetic information. Quit pretending to speak for the deity: such pious egotism is revolting! Study life, not an old book, and practice humility!

Lew W. Wallace, M.D.
San Gabriel, CA

Wittgenstein, not Pascal

Edward Oakes' appreciative review of Cyril Barrett's *Wittgenstein on Ethics and Religious Beliefs* (October 1992) is marred only by an error of attribution: the final quotation cited in the review ("If [Christ] did not rise from the dead . . . he is a teacher like any other and can no longer *help*. . . . ") comes not from Pascal but from Wittgenstein himself. Indeed, any who remain skeptical of Wittgenstein because of his connections with the Vienna Circle should invest an hour browsing through *Culture and Value*, where the remark appeared (p.33). Such an examination will show that one can learn more about the relation between religious belief and intellectual inquiry from Wittgenstein than from any number of contemporary theologians, who seem to think that the way to resolve the tension between faith and reason is by the abandonment of one or the other. Wittgenstein, like Pascal, saw the need to respect the rights of both, in their proper spheres.

Jeffrey Peterson
New Haven, CT

The misattribution occurred because of an error in editing. Our apologies to Professor Oakes.
—The Editors

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Opinion

Baptism and Development

Joan Frawley Desmond

In the north Indian state of Bihar, there are indigenous peoples who never converted to the Hinduism of the Aryan people that conquered and settled India long ago. Some of these tribals, as they are called, exist in another century, perhaps another millennium. In one hamlet, there is a well for drinking water, but no one has used it since a child fell down it and died four years ago. The illiterate villagers fear disturbing the child's spirit, which, they believe, still resides in that well. Not long ago, dysentery killed twenty-six tribal villagers within two weeks' time. No one went to the doctor or the dispensary down the road, because they were suspicious of the doctor's magic.

A few hours' journey from this hamlet, members of the same tribe inhabit a cluster of villages where living standards are dramatically better. Here, farmers use fertilizers, educate their children, and pay for health insurance. The village "sacrificer," a sort of shaman, has long since given up his ancient art of placating the spirits. These villagers are Christians, the fruit of a late-nineteenth-century Jesuit missionary effort that has transformed the tribal belt of Chotanagpur, a plateau stretching across part of Bihar and the eastern portion of Madhya Pradesh, a neighboring state in northern India.

Far from the primitive villages of Chotanagpur, American Christians are debating recent efforts to secularize church aid programs in Asia and Africa, and to discourage mission personnel from evangelizing non-Christians. The reasons for the debate are not hard to see. Christian churches in the West are wracked by self-doubt, no longer confident of the Gospel's universality. This crisis of faith converges with the faddish multiculturalist position—articulated in the National Council of Churches statement on the 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America—which damns the Christian faith, and the liberal values it gave rise to, as inherently destructive of aboriginal culture.

Christians who accept this argument not only defy the biblical injunction to preach to all nations, they suffer from a serious failure of charity and imagination. The multiculturalist, anti-missionary position assumes that humanity's most backward people want to stay that way. Perhaps some do, or did. But what of those who have welcomed a new and arguably broader vision of their life? Perhaps their closed community had reached a dead end. What if their frail tribal identity stood defenseless against the onslaught of alien notions of progress, social discrimination, or economic enslavement?

As Western churches discuss the political correctness of Christian evangelization among native people, it seems that many people have lost sight of the astonishing social change brought about by mission efforts in places like Chotanagpur. There a modern conversion movement offers a strong case for retaining the best of the traditional missionary ethos.

In 1885, when a young Flemish Jesuit named Constant Lievens brought the Christian faith to the Munda, Kharia, and Oraon tribals of Chotanagpur, he never considered bypassing evangelization for the greater cause of economic change. He understood that social development depended on religious conversion. But Lievens also knew that the people would follow him only if he defended their rights and offered solutions to their plight. He began by addressing the paralyzing fear that dominated tribal life: fear of the Hindu landlords and fear of evil spirits.

From the fourth century A.D. until the sixteenth century, tribal farmers—also known as Adivasis—had peacefully cultivated the land cleared by their ancestors. Then in the 1500s the arrival of Hindu intruders, or *dikus*, introduced a tragic era of oppression. The Hindus, better educated and more affluent, challenged the tribals' property rights. Many Adivasis were forced to give up their land. Bonded labor, exorbitant taxes, and other forms of exploitation were also imposed by the *dikus*.

In their battle against the landlords, or *zamindars*, the tribals constantly turned to the "spirit world" for help. They believed that the spirits of tribal ancestors remained among the living, providing a vital link between the visible world and the spiritual world, between the Adivasis, the land, the tribal god, and the creator.

Evil spirits, thought to have been brought by the Hindus, also roamed the tribals' world, contaminating their ancient beliefs. Droughts, illness, and thievery were blamed on these mischievous spirits, who required constant appeasement through ritual sacrifices. Over time, tribal spirituality began to break down under the weight of superstitious practices and witchhunts.

Lievens defended tribal property rights in court, despite the landlords' violent retaliations, but he categorically rejected witchcraft and superstition. During his tours of isolated hamlets, he challenged the people's "fear of spirits, fear of the unknown powers, of the mysterious world beyond," as one biography explains. Lievens had religious reasons

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for attacking "devil worship." But he also contended that superstitious beliefs, fortified by illiteracy, engendered a passive, fatalistic acceptance of failure and exploitation.

Meanwhile, the Jesuits developed practical answers to the Adivasis' legal and economic problems. A Catholic school system, beginning with elementary schools in every major village and crowned by seven colleges, made tribal families literate, self-confident, and eager to experiment with nonviolent solutions to their dependence on moneylenders and their land war with the *zamindars*. Jesuit-supervised cooperative banks and credit unions, funded by tribal members, became exercises in effective group action. Loans were guaranteed by the applicants' fellow parishioners, who learned that a successful outcome required their support and supervision.

Slowly, the missionaries ignited the renewal of Adivasi culture. About 140,000 tribals had entered the Catholic Church by 1910. However, the Jesuits were also educating and training non-Christians, extending the mission's influence beyond the converts. In 1928, the Jesuits helped to establish a civic organization that addressed problems regarding political representation and anti-tribal discrimination. Previously, most tribals would have shrunk from negotiations with the Hindu-dominated economic and political system; now they were prepared to meet their old foes on equal terms. Later, during the years preceding Indian independence, Christians emerged as major tribal political leaders. After 1947, they gradually moved to the forefront of mainstream Indian politics in Bihar.

Almost from the start, the Chotanagpur conversion movement has provoked questions about the legitimacy of the conversions and criticism of the Jesuits' methods. Many Hindus and church figures, including some Jesuits, have contended that the tribal converts were "rice Christians," motivated by greed rather than religious fervor. Critics have attacked the Jesuits' heavy-handed conversion methods (initially, Lievens would not provide legal help until the tribals were baptized). Some detractors even contended that tribal affluence would put the church out of business: The converts' newfound economic independence might lead them to drift away from the mission. After Lievens' death, J. B. Hoffman, a German Jesuit and the primary force behind the mission's economic programs, defended the bold initiatives:

> True Christianity, so far from pauperizing people, must necessarily tend to relieve poverty by the only means worthy of men, viz., by thrift and a distinct rise in the intellectual and moral level of the masses. . . . [The mission must demonstrate that] the Catholic Church is able and willing to give them that which they still lack and without which they cannot be saved as a race, sound economic organization raising them above their present abject poverty, enabling them not only to live decently in their country, but also to take all the resources of their country into their own hands instead of leaving them to unsympathetic aliens.

Doubtless, some tribal conversions have been more "legitimate" than others, but the Adivasis church has withstood the test of time. Today in the district of Ranchi, an area of Bihar that was once the center of Lievens' operations, conversions continue, albeit at a slower rate, and the Church still offers programs designed to reverse a cultural tendency toward fatalism. The professors teaching in Catholic colleges are the sons of farmers with grade school educations. Tribal missionary nuns prepare to spread the Gospel to other parts of the region. Young tribal men and women compete with Hindus for town jobs and university slots.

In the countryside, amid small huts made of mud and straw, the social and economic differences between Christians and non-Christians are most evident. While the latter engage in disputes over witchcraft and some even forage for root vegetables, Christian villagers cooperate on joint agricultural ventures and banking schemes. Typically, both groups live together harmoniously in a dusty hamlet, and many non-Christians take advantage of church schools and farming programs. But the Christians are moving ahead faster. They have begun to build houses instead of mud huts, and their children appear more at ease with strangers. They have come to terms with the non-tribal world and it no longer threatens them.

During a visit I made to Ranchi last year, an older Flemish Jesuit deplored the notion that social advancement could be separated from spiritual concerns. Referring to the multiculturalist virus, which has infected younger Indian Jesuits, he said that it would be a terrible mistake to ignore the spiritual dilemma of non-Christian tribals. "After baptism, you see the fear leave their eyes," he said. "Lievens told the people that he would free them from fear of the landlords and of the evil spirits. He didn't know, then, that the people came to him primarily because they wanted to be free of the *dikus'* spirits."

The best missionaries have understood the Gospel's allure for native peoples struggling against spiritual and cultural stagnation. Christianity affirms basic human rights, offers a coherent and moral approach to a changing world, celebrates community life, and unlocks the redemptive power of suffering. In the modern world, the unique treasures of Christian faith and culture often are perceived as museum artifacts that belong to an increasingly distant past. Now we are poised to lock

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up these treasures, preventing access by non-Christians, and, one day, by ourselves.

JOAN FRAWLEY DESMOND, *a freelance writer, was based in India for three years before relocating to Tokyo, Japan. She is conducting research for a book on the final generation of foreign missionaries in Asia.*

Cult and Culture

Peter J. Leithart

Ecclesiastical anarchism has a long history in American Christianity, but few have gone quite as far as James H. Rutz, whose new book, *The Open Church,* had a prominent advertising spread in *World,* an evangelical news magazine. To his credit, Rutz has identified some of the glaring weaknesses of American evangelicalism. He rightly detests worship that reduces congregations from priests to spectators, the superficiality of relationships within the body of Christ, and the apparent impotence of Christianity in the world. No one who has thought seriously about American Christianity will deny the validity of many of Rutz's diagnoses. I suspect that few pastors would argue with his claim that congregations place excessive burdens on their pastors.

Unfortunately, Rutz's medicine—the "open Church" of his title—is, to my mind, at least as bad as the disease. Covered with a patina of naive historical scholarship, Rutz's book proposes a restoration of the simple, warm, exciting community of the New Testament Church. To that end, he favors the elimination of the classical pastoral office. Gene Edwards, who serves as guest author of several chapters in *The Open Church*, claims that early Christian documents make "absolutely no mention of a 'minister' or 'priest' or 'pastor' or another term for any office or any kind of leadership." Instead, "to the early Christian, his church elder (bishop) was a 'regular guy.'" (These sentences, which appear in successive paragraphs, give one pause: Who were these elder-bishops, if there were no terms for officers?) While the authors laud the Reformation's theological achievement, they are extremely unhappy about its overly intellectual emphasis. Doctrine divides, but . . . well, you know the rest. And there is something more than a little disingenuous about a prophetic call to return to the simplicity of the New Testament Church that is backed by a $100,000 advertising campaign.

Rutz and Edwards save their most severe criticism for Protestant worship. Here as nowhere else, the authors insist, the Reformers failed the Church. Without the slightest effort at sympathetic understanding, they dismiss traditional Protestant liturgies by saying they are "just as unimaginative, ossified, hidebound, ridiculous, boring, dead, and irrelevant to modern man as what Gregory [the Great] invented."

Tracts such as *The Open Church* illustrate in glaring colors the difficulties Protestants have always had with ritual. Medieval Rome's liturgical and sacramental customs were among the Reformers' chief targets. According to the Reformers, the Roman Catholic view of ritual and sacrament verged on the magical. The Reformers attacked the notion, attributed to Roman Catholics, that the rites and sacraments of the Church automatically communicated grace, and emphasized instead that Christ is always and everywhere received by faith. The Reformers saw themselves as heirs of the Old Testament prophets who denounced Israel's trust in the bricks and ritual of Solomon's temple.

Having dismissed the Roman view of ritual, the Reformers were faced with the challenge of the Anabaptist "left wing" of the Reformation: if rites do not function automatically, then why retain them at all? If subjective faith is really crucial, what need does the believer have of objective externals? To the extent the Reformers retained traditional liturgies and claimed that the sacraments had objective reality, the Anabaptists charged, they showed themselves to be still in thrall to Rome.

The position of the Reformers was not an enviable one: they had to resist the apparent logic of Anabaptism without abandoning their principles of "Scripture alone" and "faith alone." They insisted they could not abandon ritual altogether because Jesus Himself had commanded His followers to enact the rites of the supper and baptism. Rather than attributing quasi-magical powers to the sacraments, they defined the sacraments as means of strengthening faith.

I would not be a Protestant if I did not believe that the Reformers were fundamentally successful in their two-front war, but honesty compels the admission that their via media between Rome and the Anabaptists was sometimes precarious. Later Protestants have had difficulty avoiding embarrassment on this score. On the one hand, there is embarrassment in the face of Rome's claim to objectivity; on the other hand, there is the embarrassment of not having finished the revolution of subjectivity that, according to the Anabaptists, Luther started.

Useful materials for a Protestant theology of ritual are, however, not lacking. In his stimulating little volume, *Peculiar Speech*, William Willimon applies some of the insights of recent philosophy and theology to preaching. Following Alasdair MacIntyre and Stanley Hauerwas, Willimon chal-

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lenges the Enlightenment notions of universal reason and universal language. Language and meaning are culture-specific. Language and culture are virtually two sides of the same coin; to cross a cultural barrier is to cross a language barrier, and vice versa. This is true even when the official language is the same on both sides of the barrier. Residents of Manhattan and Montgomery, Alabama may all speak English, but in a more than grammatical sense they speak different languages.

Thus, Willimon argues, "Christianity can be described as a culture, a set of practices, beliefs, a distinctive language." A convert to Christianity does not leave some abstract universal "culture" when he comes to Christ; he moves instead from one culture into another and in doing so also crosses a language barrier. Christians "must learn Christianity, even as we learn a foreign language." Preachers likewise do not speak in a cultural void; they preach to the baptized, and thus cannot avoid "baptismal truth that we preach within a distinctive universe of discourse. We talk funny." Preaching involves cultivation of "those insights, means of describing, and vocabulary with which Christians describe the world."

What Willimon asserts about preaching is true of worship more generally. Worship is primarily public homage to the King of kings, but worship can also be seen as the cultivation of a distinctively Christian culture, that is, a distinctively Christian way of naming the world. Worship is language class, where the Church is trained to speak Christian.

This perspective underscores the wisdom of the Reformers' choice of structured worship. One best learns a foreign language by repetition. Traditional liturgies, with their "boring" and "hidebound" recitation of Psalms, creeds, and rote prayers, drill converts in their new language. Not only is the worshiper made part of the culture of Christianity, but, more importantly, that culture is made part of the worshiper. From this perspective, the Babel of charismatic worship is seen as the abandonment, not the fulfillment, of Christian worship. How can the Church be trained to speak Christian when everyone says what is right in his own ears?

Such an understanding of ritual lends itself to the construction of a Protestant theology of culture. George Steiner suggested in *In Bluebeard's Castle* that the shared norms and images of Western culture were inculcated by Scripture and the liturgies of the Church: "Scriptural and, in a wider sense, religious literacy ran strong, particularly in Protestant lands. The Authorized Version and Luther's Bible carried in their wake a rich tradition of symbolic, allusive, and syntactic awareness. Absorbed in childhood, the Book of Common Prayer, the Lutheran hymnal and psalmody cannot but have marked a broad compass of mental life and their exact, stylized articulateness and music of thought."

In short, as many writers have observed, it is no accident that culture and cult derive from the same root.

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Creator or Blind Watchmaker?

Phillip E. Johnson

As a notorious critic of Darwinism, I enjoy reading a newsletter called *Basis*, which is published by an organization calling itself the San Francisco Bay Area Skeptics. These self-styled skeptics take a very dim view of anyone who suggests that the Darwinian theory of evolution might be an appropriate subject for skeptical inquiry, and on that account their editorial ire is sometimes aimed in my direction. A recent issue of *Basis* reported on a local meeting at which the featured speaker was a woman identified as "a religious person and science teacher at a Catholic school." This science teacher was assuring her audience that despite the religious affiliation of her school, she taught evolution and not creationism in her science classes. A questioner from the audience put her on the spot by asking: "Do you think that evolution is directed?" The newsletter reports that this question was followed by a "dramatic pause," after which the teacher replied with what it called a "battled 'No.'" The reporter for *Basis* commented: "I would have expected a more rapid answer, but the battle between her curriculum and her beliefs had a few more moments of unrest left to settle."

The appearance of that story coincided with the release of a new Gallup Poll, reporting on the state of American opinion regarding evolution and creation. According to this survey, approximately 47 percent of Americans can be described as creationists, in that they say they believe that God created mankind in pretty much our present form sometime within the last 10,000 years. (The wording of the question did not rule out a long period of animal evolution before the appearance of man, however.) Another 40 percent agreed with the following statement: "Man has developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life, but God guided this process, including man's creation." Only 9 percent of the sample said that they accepted the naturalistic view of evolution, which in Gallup's wording was that man has developed over millions of years from less advanced forms of life, with God having no part in this process.

Against that background of public opinion, we can see why the voice from the audience was asking exactly the right question, and also why we might expect a science teacher at a Christian institution to take a deep breath before answering in a quavering voice. When Darwinists speak of "evolution," they mean the creed of the 9 percent. Science educators frequently obscure this point in order to avoid further arousing political opposition to the teaching of evolution as fact in the public schools, but they are perfectly explicit about it when candor suits their purpose. For example, one of the founders of the neo-Darwinian synthesis, Harvard paleontologist George Gaylord Simpson, explained the "meaning of evolution" in the following widely quoted language:

> Although many details remain to be worked out, it is already evident that all the objective phenomena of the history of life can be explained by purely naturalistic or, in a proper sense of the sometimes abused word, materialistic factors. They are readily explicable on the basis of differential reproduction in populations (the main factor in the modern conception of natural selection) and of the mainly random interplay of the known processes of heredity. . . . Man is the result of a purposeless and natural process that did not have him in mind.

The literature of evolutionary biology contains countless statements to the same effect. "Evolution," honestly understood, is not just a gradual process of development that a purposeful Creator might have chosen to employ. It is, by Darwinist definition, a purposeless and undirected process that produced mankind accidentally. By saying that she taught "evolution," the Catholic school teacher had said only that she did not teach the sudden, special

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creation of each species. She was not with the 47 percent who (perhaps) reject evolution altogether, but she might still be with the 40 percent who think there is a compromise position that combines creation and evolution. From a Darwinist viewpoint, however, this soft form of creationism is merely a relatively advanced kind of misunderstanding. Did the teacher really explain to her students and their parents that biological evolution is not God-directed but rather a purposeless process that produced mankind by accident? If so, how could she or her superiors possibly reconcile this teaching with their official commitment to Christian theism?

Now, through an educational system insistent upon uncritical acceptance by students at all levels of the claim that purposeless material mechanisms were responsible for the creation of all forms of life, scientific naturalism is becoming the officially established religion of America. There is no mystery about why atheists and agnostics welcome this kind of education. What is mysterious, however, is the relative lack of opposition to the establishment of naturalism from Christian intellectuals. There are, of course, theologians who have embraced naturalism with enthusiasm and proceeded to try to "save" Christianity by purging it of supernaturalism and mythology; one can be a Christian, or at least a professor at certain liberal Christian seminaries or divinity schools, and be as opposed to the existence of a supernatural Creator as any atheist. But Christians and other theists, who really believe in a personal God standing outside nature and ruling it—how can they accommodate the dictates of a scientific establishment that absolutely insists that all creation resulted from undirected evolution?

Some people don't accommodate, but simply reject the authority of that establishment in toto. Those who regard Scripture as more authoritative than scientific theories, and who are confident that they know the correct way to interpret it, may choose to defend the Genesis account as literally true and employ scientific argument to discredit the alternatives. Fundamentalist creationists of this kind make up perhaps half of the 47 percent that the Gallup poll defined as creationist. Unfortunately, the commitment of this large group to a literal interpretation of Genesis has confused and divided the Christian world, and even played into the hands of the evolutionary naturalists. Darwinists assiduously promote the notion that the only possible alternatives are six-day Genesis literalism on the one hand, and fully naturalistic, neo-Darwinistic evolution on the other. Given such an understanding of the alternatives, anyone who suspects that the cosmos may be billions of years old, or that life may have been created through some long-term process of development, becomes an "evolutionist"—who by definition rejects "creationism." Under Darwinist auspices, science education, in the media as well as the schools, consequently aims to enlighten such persons about what evolution really means, and to wash the lingering effects of creationism from their minds. "Properly" educated people gradually learn that forces like mutation and selection were adequate to perform all the work of biological creation, and that the notion of a purposeful Creator is therefore superfluous, discardable without loss.

By controlling the terminology, then, Darwinists have given the world the impression that the significant divide in public opinion about evolution is that between the Genesis literalists and everybody else. This is a sorry misunderstanding. For the fundamental disagreement is not over the age of the earth or the method of creation; it is over whether we owe our existence to a purposeful Creator or a blind materialistic process. The 47 percent in the 1991 Gallup Poll who say that God created suddenly and the 40 percent who say that God created gradually are basically in agreement—in comparison to the 9 percent who say that God did not create at all. When the majority finally understands this, it will become possible to challenge the monopoly of evolutionary naturalism both in the media and the educational system.

What the situation requires is a critique of evolutionary naturalism that puts aside the biblical issues for the time being and concentrates on the scientific and philosophical weaknesses in the established Darwinist orthodoxy. Unfortunately, many of the most influential Christian intellectuals have themselves been so strongly influenced by naturalistic philosophy that they have tried to baptize it. Their position, which I call theistic naturalism, starts from the premise that God refrains from interference with those parts of reality that natural science has staked out as its own territory. Theistic naturalists concede to Darwinism the role of telling the true history of the development of life, and limit the Creator to activity in a metaphysical realm outside the reach of science. Theistic naturalism is more often implicit than explicit in religious discourse—as befits a philosophy so dominant in intellectual circles that people hardly ever have to think about it in any detail. Princeton Theological Seminary Professor Diogenes Allen's 1989 book *Christian Belief in a Postmodern World: The Full Weight of Conviction* provides a particularly thorough and thoughtful explication of theistic naturalism. Allen explains the division between the realms of science and theology by saying that there are questions a naturalistic science cannot purport to answer.

> Our natural sciences seek to describe and explain the relations *between* the members of

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> the universe, not their origin. The existence of the universe and its basic constituents are taken for granted by our sciences. . . . When we consider the whole of nature, the relations we find within nature cannot tell us why the universe exists nor why it is the kind of universe it is. The continuing increase of scientific knowledge, which discovers the relations that exist within our universe, does not get us closer to an answer to either question.

The role of religion, then, is to explain the ultimate features of the universe that remain when science has done everything of which it is capable. Up to that point, naturalism in scientific explanations is not only permitted but actually *required* by a correct view of God's role and nature. According to Allen,

> God can never properly be used in scientific accounts, which are formulated in terms of the relations between the members of the universe, because that would reduce God to the status of a creature. According to a Christian conception of God as creator of a universe that is rational through and through, there are no missing relations between the members of nature. If, in our study of nature, we run into what seems to be an instance of a connection missing between members of nature, the Christian doctrine of creation implies that we should keep looking for one.

When the philosopher Alvin Plantinga expressed skepticism towards Darwinism in a lecture published in a special issue of the *Christian Scholar's Review*, and proposed that Christians engage in a "theistic science" to counter the domination of naturalism, commentators employed reasoning similar to Allen's to throw cold water on the idea. Calvin College physics professor Howard Van Till argued that "the world created by the God who reveals himself in Scripture" must be characterized by what Van Till calls "functional integrity." This term denotes "a created world that has no functional deficiencies, no gaps in its economy of the sort that would require God to act immediately, temporarily assuming the role of creature to perform functions within the economy of the creation that other creatures have not been equipped to perform." Notre Dame philosophy professor Ernan McMullin argued in the same vein that it is improbable that an omniscient creator would find it necessary to intervene in the cosmic order to "plug the gaps."

This line of reasoning establishes a remarkable convergence of Christian theism and scientific naturalism. Consider, for example, the attitude that scientific naturalists take towards theories of chemical evolution, which aspire to explain the origin of life on earth. Until very recently, the popular and professional literature of this field tended to be wildly optimistic, suggesting that science was on the verge of providing a satisfactory theory of how life evolved from nonliving chemicals. The current literature is much more sober, and some commentators candidly describe the field as dominated by contradictory speculations and lack of experimental success. One of these commentators is New York University chemistry professor Robert Shapiro, author of the excellent popular book *Origins: A Skeptic's View of the Creation of Life on Earth*. Shapiro realizes that a satisfactory theory of chemical evolution may be a long time coming, but his faith in naturalistic explanation is equal to the challenge:

> Some future day may yet arrive when all reasonable chemical experiments run to discover a probable origin for life have failed unequivocally. Further, new geological evidence may indicate a sudden appearance of life on the earth. Finally, we may have explored the universe and found no trace of life, or processes leading to life, elsewhere. In such a case, some scientists might choose to turn to religion for an answer. Others, myself included, would attempt to sort out the surviving less probable scientific explanations in the hope of selecting one that was still more likely than the remainder.

The theistic naturalists seem to share this fervent faith that a naturalistic explanation for the origin of life simply *must* be there to be found. To suppose that God may have played some direct, active role in creating the first life on earth would reduce God to the status of a creature, would posit an impossible missing relation between the members of nature, and would deny the functional integrity of the universe. One might almost say that it would constitute blasphemy.

A basis for a convergence between theism and naturalism may be found in the writings of George Gaylord Simpson. Simpson, one of the founders of the neo-Darwinian theory, was a thoroughgoing scientific naturalist who derided Christianity as superstition. Nonetheless, he was willing to acknowledge that science could not explain everything, and that some kind of place for religion might be found in that philosophical territory which is beyond the reach of scientific investigation. As he put it:

> There is neither need nor excuse for postulation of nonmaterial intervention in the origin of life, the rise of man, or any other part of the long history of the material cosmos.

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> Yet the origin of that cosmos and the causal principles of its history remain unexplained and inaccessible to science. Here is hidden the First Cause sought by theology and philosophy. The First Cause is not known and I suspect it will never be known to living man. We may, if we are so inclined, worship it in our own ways, but we certainly do not comprehend it.

Simpson's First Cause, like the God of theistic naturalism, is responsible for the ultimate origin and original characteristics of the cosmos, but thereafter leaves creation entirely to material processes that go their own way. Simpson thought that the First Cause could be mentioned and then forgotten, because he assumed that science would eventually explain nearly everything of consequence to human beings. The role left to the First Cause would then be so small, and so remote from human concerns, that only the incorrigibly religious would have any interest in it. Recently, the physicist Stephen Hawking has moved to take away even that vestigial refuge, predicting that physicists will soon discover a "theory of everything" that will permit them to "know [i.e., become] the mind of God."

It is more likely, however, that there are important questions that can never be answered by scientific inquiry. For example, many persons who are adamant about the exclusive authority of science in explaining the physical world are willing to concede that questions about morality or the purpose of life have to be addressed in some other way. As the realm of science diminishes in our imagination, the potential importance of the First Cause correspondingly increases. All we have to do is take up Simpson's invitation to worship the First Cause and it becomes the God of theistic naturalism, which is responsible for the ultimate origin of the universe and its initial boundary conditions, but which never intervenes to take a part in natural history.

But can this First Cause fill the role of "the God who reveals Himself in Scripture"? The biblical God seems to engage in a lot of creaturely behavior. The New Testament tells us that the Second Person of the Trinity was born as a human baby in a stable in Bethlehem, and after growing to adulthood performed some very immediate miraculous acts before dying a very creaturely death on the cross. He changed water into wine, healed leprosy and blindness, fed multitudes on scraps of food, raised Lazarus from the dead, and eventually rose from the dead Himself and ascended to heaven. Is this a God who would never, in Van Till's words, "temporarily [assume] the role of creature to perform functions within the economy of the creation that other creatures have not been equipped to perform"? And how can so much supernatural activity be reconciled with a naturalistic philosophy of creation?

There are two schools of thought among theistic naturalists about how to deal with this problem. One approach, characteristic of the liberal theology that culminated in Tillich and Bultmann, is to interpret the miracles as mythology. This is at least consistently naturalistic, but it relegates Christianity to the role of a human ethical system or existential choice. The other approach is to treat the miracles as real events, but to restrict them to a "salvation history" that is walled off from the natural history over which science claims exclusive authority. Diogenes Allen takes this latter approach:

> In general we may say that God creates a consistent set of lawlike behaviors. As part of that set there are the known physical laws. These laws apply to a wide variety of situations. But in certain unusual situations such as creating a chosen people, revealing divine intentions in Jesus, and revealing the nature of the kingdom of God, higher laws come into play that give a different outcome than normal physical laws which concern different situations. The normal physical laws do not apply because we are in a domain that extends beyond their competence.

A division of this kind is about the best a Christian theologian can do—if he wants to respect the authority of naturalistic science within its own sphere. From a biblical standpoint, however, it is not only the events of salvation history that create difficulties for any compromise with naturalism. One is faced not simply with the details of the Genesis account, but with New Testament passages that reflect the fundamental logic of Christianity. For example, the first chapter of Romans tells us that

> the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men, who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles.

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That passage does not speak of a nature that merely raises questions that a naturalistic science cannot answer, but of a nature that points directly and unmistakably toward the necessity of a creator. And if nature does no more than raise questions, how can men be blamed for coming to the wrong conclusions about what to worship? If God stayed in that realm beyond the reach of scientific investigation, and allowed an apparently blind materialistic evolutionary process to do all the work of creation, then it would have to be said that God furnished us with a world of excuses for unbelief and idolatry.

There is an even more important passage to consider. The most important statement about creation in the Bible is not in Genesis; it is in the opening verses of the first chapter of John.

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God, all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

The direct opposite of that statement is creation by purely materialistic, undirected evolution. Accommodationists can throw out a lot of nonessentials and still keep the substance of Christianity, but creation through the Word is one of the essentials.

Biblical considerations aside, theistic naturalism has a fatal logical weakness that stems from the fact that it attempts to reconcile two fundamentally inconsistent ways of thinking. Theism asserts that God rules everything; naturalism asserts that nature proceeds on its own, without supernatural influence. The two could be reconciled if we had some reason to believe that God chose to leave nature alone after establishing the initial conditions—except, of course, for the exceptional events of salvation history. It is hard to imagine any purpose for such a self-limitation other than the need to make a treaty of peace between science and theology, which is a consideration hardly likely to influence God. In any case, Darwinistic evolution would be a most peculiar creative method for God to choose, given the Darwinistic insistence that biological evolution was *undirected*. That requirement means that God neither programmed evolution in advance nor stepped in from time to time to pull it in the right direction. How then did God ensure that humans would come into existence so that salvation history would have a chance to occur? Once this logical difficulty is recognized, the attempt to reconcile Darwinism and theism collapses. Either God rules creation—which means that He somehow directed evolution to produce humans—or He doesn't. The former isn't Darwinism, and the latter isn't theism.

Of course, God *could* make some use of random mutation and natural selection in a fundamentally directed creative process. God can act freely as He chooses: that is just the problem for those who would constrain God by philosophy. God could employ mutation and selection or act supernaturally, whether or not His choice causes inconvenience for scientists who want to be able to explain and control everything. Once we allow God to enter the picture at all, there is no reason to be certain a priori that natural science has the power to discover the entire mechanism of creation. Maybe science can discover how living things were made, and maybe it can't. Consistent theists will therefore accept Darwinist claims for the creative power of mutation and selection only insofar as those claims can be supported by evidence. That isn't very far at all.

It isn't easy to assess the adequacy of the evidence, however, because Darwinists employ a vocabulary that systematically distracts attention from the central issue. "Evolution" is a thoroughly confusing term that may be used in a broad or narrow sense. As we have seen, it sometimes simply means no more than that creation took a lot longer than six days. In debates with those opposed to their views, Darwinists typically define the "fact of evolution" as meaning merely that "the earth has a history," or that "change has occurred." So defined, evolution is neither theologically important nor scientifically interesting. Having established this empty concept of evolution, however, Darwinists immediately go on to use the same term as if it meant neo-Darwinistic evolution, with an all-encompassing creative role for natural selection. Unpack the terminology and you will find the following illogic: change has occurred, and therefore mutation and selection caused the change to occur.

Darwinists use "evolution" to mean *both* minor variations and major creative innovations, and also *both* change that is directed by intelligence and change that is presumed to be undirected. That is why they think that domestic animal breeding, which employs purposeful human intelligence to achieve variation within the biological species, somehow illustrates how a purposeless material process created animals in the first place. "Evolution" in Darwinist usage stands for many different things, and an illustration of evolution in any sense proves the entire system. To get away from this tradition of confusion, we have to employ a terminology that keeps attention on the really important claim of Darwinism—*which is that biological creation could and did occur by known material mechanisms without the need for supernatural assistance.*

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This central doctrine might be called the "blind watchmaker hypothesis," after the title of the famous book by Oxford University zoologist Richard Dawkins. Dawkins begins his book with the observation that "biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose." That sounds like a creationist argument, and indeed Dawkins is happy to concede that each and every plant or animal cell nucleus contains "a digitally coded database larger, in information content, than all 30 volumes of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* put together." Undirected material processes do not write encyclopedias, no matter how much time is available. Of course, Dawkins is no creationist. He wrote *The Blind Watchmaker* to convince the public of something that Darwinists take for granted: namely, that the appearance of purposeful design in biology is misleading, because all living organisms, including ourselves, are the products of a natural evolutionary process employing random variation and natural selection. As Dawkins explains:

> Natural selection is the blind watchmaker, blind because it does not see ahead, does not plan consequences, has no purpose in view. Yet the living results of natural selection overwhelmingly impress us with the appearance of design as if by a master watchmaker, impress us with the illusion of design and planning.

In short, the watchmaker is not only blind, but unconscious.

Is the blind watchmaker hypothesis *true*? From the naturalistic standpoint of Darwinists like Dawkins, the question really doesn't arise. Instead of truth, the important concept is *science*, which is understood to be our only (or at least by far our most reliable) means of attaining knowledge. Science is then defined as an activity in which only naturalistic explanations are considered, and in which the goal is always to improve the best existing naturalistic explanation. Supernatural creation—or God-guided evolution—is not a naturalistic explanation. The blind watchmaker hypothesis is therefore merely a way of stating the commitment of "science" to naturalism, and as such the existence of a blind watchmaker is a logical necessity. If a critic doesn't like Darwinism, his only permissible move is to suggest a better blind watchmaker. That a competent blind watchmaker doesn't exist at all is not a logical possibility.

That is why Dawkins and other Darwinists never prove the blind watchmaker hypothesis: instead, they illustrate it. A Darwinist only has to imagine how some complex organ or organism might have originated by mutation and selection, and the theory has another confirming example. For example, Dawkins imagines that small tree-dwelling mammals might have survived falls more frequently if they happened to grow flaps of skin between their digits that slowed their descent. Over many generations, these flaps might have grown into wings as further mutations accumulated, and so four-footed creatures might become flying bats. That sort of storytelling counts as a scientific explanation in Darwinist circles, and no one expects the storyteller to demonstrate that such a process either can or did occur.

There is no doubt that natural processes produce a degree of variation in existing genotypes, as illustrated by the differences between island species and their close mainland relatives. The question is whether similar processes have the power to furnish the genetic information required for (say) bacteria to become complex plants and animals, or for four-footed mammals to change into bats and whales. Darwinian evolution of the genuinely creative sort can't be observed in the field or the laboratory, or traced in the fossil record. Functional intermediates between distinct types often can't even be imagined. No matter: by Darwinist logic natural selection had to do the job anyway, or we wouldn't be here to carp at the lack of evidence. Critics may cite any number of objections, but at the end of the day the Darwinists still hold title to that term "science." As long as their rules are in force, their theory cannot be unseated.

When people ask whether Darwinism and theism are compatible, they normally take the Darwinism for granted and ask whether the theism has to be discarded. It is far more illuminating, however, to approach the question from the other side. Is there any reason that a person who believes in a real, personal God should believe that biological creation occurred by Darwinian evolution? The answer is clearly no. The sufficiency of any process of chemical evolution to produce life has certainly not been demonstrated, nor has the ability of natural selection to produce new body plans, complex organs, or anything else except variation within types that already exist. The fossil record notoriously does not evidence any continuous process of gradual change. Rather, it consistently shows that new forms appear suddenly and fully formed in the rocks, and thereafter remain fundamentally unchanged. That is why fossil experts from T. H. Huxley to Stephen Jay Gould have flirted with the heresy that biological transformations occurred in great (and therefore scientifically inexplicable) jumps. If Darwinian evolution is the only allowable source for life's diversity and complexity, then the shortage of evidence doesn't matter. The only question, to borrow Darwin's own words, is why "Nature may almost be said to have guarded against the frequent discovery of her transitional or linking forms."

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Atheists can leave the matter there, but theists have to go farther. If God exists, then Darwinian evolution is not the only alternative, and there is no reason for a theist to believe that God employed it beyond the relatively trivial level where the effects of variation and selection can actually be observed.

In short, the reason that Darwinism and theism are fundamentally incompatible is not that God could not have used evolution by natural selection to do his creating. Darwinian evolution might seem unbiblical to some, or too cruel and wasteful a method for a benevolent Creator to choose, but it is always possible that God might do something that confounds our expectations. No, the contradiction between Darwinism and theism goes much deeper. To know that Darwinism is true (as a general explanation for the history of life), one has to know that no alternative to naturalistic evolution is possible. To know *that* is to assume that God does not exist, or at least that God does not or cannot create. To infer that mutation and selection did the creating because nothing else was available, and then to bring God back into the picture as the omnipotent being who chose to create by mutation and selection, is to indulge in self-contradiction. That is why Darwin and his successors have always felt that theistic evolutionists were missing the point, although they have often tolerated them as useful allies.

Failure to understand that Darwinism is primarily a philosophical rather than an empirical doctrine has made theistic naturalists unduly fearful of incurring what is called the "god of the gaps" problem. This problem arises when we point to some gap in current scientific knowledge, and attribute unexplained events to a divine cause. The better theological position, of course, is that God is responsible for all events, and not just those for which scientific explanations are currently lacking. Moreover, if science is in general on the right track, many gaps will eventually be filled with satisfactory explanations. In which case God—or rather, His supporters who underestimated the power of science—will have to make an embarrassing retreat. It is largely because of fear of the "god of the gaps" problem that theistic naturalists are reluctant to encourage any challenge to the validity of Darwinism.

The question that needs to be investigated, however, is not whether there are gaps in a fundamentally sound theory that has successfully explained a great deal. It is whether Darwinism is wrong *in principle* in assuming that marvelously complex structures like the human body, or even the bacterial cell, can be built up by an unguided material process. This is a question that deserves unbiased investigation, and not only for theological reasons. If mutation and selection cannot accomplish wonders of creativity, then science is on the wrong track and needs to be brought back to reality. As a start in the right direction, critics need to encourage Darwinists to stop hiding controversial assumptions by declaring them to be facts or incorporating them into the definition of "science," and to start replacing vague words like "evolution" with a precise set of terms that can be used consistently to illuminate the points of difficulty. Nobody on any side of the issue should object to clarifying the issues that way—nobody, that is, who really wants to find out the truth.

Attempts to accommodate theism and Darwinism are inherently futile, but the accommodation of *theism and empirical science is quite another* matter. In the long run theistic religion has nothing to fear from true science, because both are human understandings of an underlying reality rooted in the same divine source. Moreover, empirical science is limited by its methods, and can only tell us *how* things work rather than whether they were brought into existence in furtherance of a higher purpose. The fact that Darwinists continually claim to have a scientific answer to the question of purpose is itself an indication that they are engaged in something other than a true empirical science.

What kind of science is Darwinism? The best answer to that question is provided in the first chapter of Douglas Futuyma's widely used college evolutionary biology textbook. Professor Futuyma, an able and dedicated defender of Darwinism, explains Darwin's importance in these words:

> By coupling undirected, purposeless variation to the blind, uncaring process of natural selection, Darwin made theological or spiritual explanations of the life processes superfluous. Together with Marx's materialistic theory of history and society and Freud's attribution of human behavior to influences over which we have little control, Darwin's theory of evolution was a crucial plank in the platform of mechanism and materialism—of much of science, in short—that has since been the stage of most Western thought.

Darwin, Marx, and Freud. These three giants of materialism head everyone's list of the most influential makers of the twentieth-century mind-set. Today there are still a few Freudians and Marxists left, but even they would be embarrassed to cite Freudianism or Marxism as examples of empirical science. We now know these ideologies for what they always were: imaginative stories told to advance a materialist worldview, and buttressed by a beguiling pretense of scientific methodology. We shouldn't let fear hold us back from investigating whether the same thing is true of Darwinism.

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A Primer on the Devil

Walter Sundberg

As modern religionists, we face a curious predicament when we think of the Devil. On the one hand, we know that the forests and glens of Western culture have been cleared of the spirits and goblins that frightened our ancestors. When we are sick, we take a pill. When we are scared by some unexplained bump in the night, we readily ascribe it, like Ebenezer Scrooge, to "a fragment of an underdone potato." On the other hand, we know of no century filled with more horror or ferocious violence than ours. We cannot speak confidently, as Ludwig Feuerbach did in 1843, of the world of "our fire and life assurance companies, our railroads and steam-carriages, our picture and sculpture galleries . . . our theaters and scientific museums." We know that the dark aspects of human life are never far from the surface.

I recall some years ago leafing through the back pages of the *New York Times* and coming across a story with a dateline from the benighted city of Bucharest. Ten churches, three synagogues, and a score of other buildings had been bulldozed by Nicolae Ceausescu to make way for a 295-foot-wide Boulevard of the Victory of Socialism. The churches included the historic Alba Postuvanu, where the national hero Michael the Brave was crowned Prince of Walachia in 1594. The *Times* story hardly caused a ripple: in the mid-1980s, there was too much to choose from on the plate of human misery. But it epitomized the politics of this century: religion facing the unrelenting assault of a demonic, atheistic ideology; noble traditions obliterated by layers of concrete.

I was reminded of the story of Faust, that curious, compelling legend that has been kicking around Western literature since the late sixteenth century. In Goethe's version of the story, Faust usurps the power of the Creator by projecting himself onto the world as mover, maker, doer. The only thing Faust is good at creating, however, is destruction. He drives the hapless Margarete (that poignant symbol of traditional culture) to death and buries the beauty of nature in aimless public work projects. In the end, everything decent and kind is destroyed. Faust is shattered. We are left with the grinning Mephistopheles.

Ceausescu has also been shattered. He was summarily executed in December 1989. Most of the tyrants of Communism, like those of fascism, have been consigned to the ash heap of history. Unfortunately, however, the end of the Evil Empire as yet brings little comfort. In the vacuum created by the collapse of governments, chaos reigns. We remain acutely aware that we continue to have the technical ability to engulf the world in its final apocalyptic flame. The Bomb might yet go off amidst the confusion of societal breakdown, its secrets already having been sold to more than one possible third-world Faust by a combination of heedless, cynical, and/or simply greedy Western institutions. While some tyrants may be dead, others—think of Pol Pot or Saddam Hussein—continue to hatch their plots. They march proudly in an unending parade of mayhem. I sense that Mephistopheles is still grinning.

Nor do we find comfort when we turn to home. Murder and desolation are our daily fare. As I write these lines, a nineteen-year-old boy is being arraigned for second degree murder in a small town in southern Minnesota. At a Friday night party, after a few beers and a joint, he played Russian roulette with his sixteen-year-old friend. As the gun went off, splattering the brains of the younger boy on the wall of a two-car garage, the nineteen-year-old's girlfriend was in the local hospital giving birth to their illegitimate son. So much for the values of

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the heartland. We should not be surprised. On cable TV, twenty-four hours a day, our children, nearly half of whom come from broken homes, can watch the pictorialized glorification of adolescent destruction and sexual profligacy done to music that reaches to the very depths of their vulnerable souls. Lest one miss the point of MTV's unending rebellion against the inherited order, the symbol of the cross dangles from nearly every ear and around every neck of rock performers.

This kind of experience, so much a part of the fabric of our daily lives, is attended to in the pages of the Scriptures. It is identified as the sinful will to undo God's good creation. It encompasses not only iniquitous humanity, but a host of degenerate spiritual forces. The Bible names the Devil as its source.

But how do we talk about the Devil? Apprehend him in thought? The Devil hovers in a twilight zone. He has become an inherited convention of language divorced from any material connection to our sophisticated religious speech. This theological marginalization was accomplished long ago. In 1821, Friedrich Schleiermacher, the father of modern dogmatics, stated the case bluntly: "The idea of the devil as developed among us is so unstable that we cannot expect anyone to be convinced of its truth." At best, he claimed, the Devil may be used poetically and in "our treasury of song" where the device of personification is quite in place; otherwise, reference to him should be studiously avoided. Schleiermacher relegated the Devil to the genteel sphere of sentiment and the picturesque. The mainline churches have blindly followed his lead.

To expurgate the Devil from the core of faith is to cut ourselves off from the nerve of biblical religion concerning the teaching of evil. It is to ignore both the Christian tradition and crucial aspects of contemporary reality. The old dogmaticians warned, "*sive diabolus, nullus redemptor*"—without the Devil, there is no Redeemer. Only by grasping the depth of the Evil One can the full extent of the love of God be known.

Perhaps an historical perspective on our problem may be of help. The last great theologian of the Western tradition for whom the Devil was at the very center of reflection was Martin Luther. As Heiko Oberman reminds us, Luther lived his life with an acute sense of "Christian existence between God and the Devil." It was not simply that he continued the old medieval belief; indeed, that is hardly the case. What Luther did, says Oberman, was to place before us the reality of the Devil's menace in the life of faith: "He even intensified it and lent to it additional urgency."

Oberman is, of course, correct. But there is more to the story. Luther also stands at the head of what has become our modern predicament. For in redefining the Devil, Luther helped—however unintentionally—to make him disappear.

Luther reports that on a Good Friday evening, as he meditated in his study on the suffering of Christ on the cross, he was suddenly startled by a vision of the Savior bright and shining on the wall, the five wounds of his Passion clearly manifest. Such a vision was not uncommon for the religious man in the Age of Faith. Luther's reaction, however, was anything but conventional. "I reflected that it must needs be an illusion and juggling of the devil," he declared, "for Christ appeared to us in his Word, and in a meaner and more humble form; therefore I spake to the vision thus: Avoid thee, confounded devil: I know no other Christ than he who was crucified, and who in his Word is pictured and presented unto me. Whereupon the vision vanished, clearly showing of whom it came."

Luther was here intensely involved in his reforming work. At every opportunity, even in the privacy of his study, he sought to cut through the Gordian knot of ecclesiastical superstition, cultic busyness, and chimerical ecstasy to ground Christian faith in the immediacy of Scripture and a pared-down sacramental life. What we have in this anecdote from the *Table Talk* is a prime example of the heroic, "enlightened" Luther whom generations of religionists have come both to admire and fear as the agent provocateur of modernity. To the desperate religious pilgrim of late medieval culture, seeking visions or cures at distant shrines, Luther's advice was hard-nosed and simple: "God has commanded that a man should care for his wife and children, perform the duties of a husband, and serve and help his neighbor." The Christian is to live fully in the world. Employing the critical light of the Gospel, Luther called the individual Christian to be highly suspicious of the flora and fauna of impractical religious activity. The discerning believer should always know that the Devil builds his chapel under the eaves of the true church. In making these claims, Luther cast the Christian exclusively upon the resource of simple, unadorned faith; which means that in a certain unavoidable sense, he threw the believer back upon the Self. As Wilhelm Dilthey once observed, the necessary corollary of the doctrine of justification is the autonomy of the individual.

While such an interpretation of the Reformer's theology has its rightful place—I myself have argued it from time to time—more needs to be said to complete the picture. Early in his career, Luther ran head on into one such autonomous Self, spawned by his doctrine, in the figure of Andreas Carlstadt. Carlstadt was one of the first examples of the rigorist Protestant who wanted to rid the church of unnecessary ceremonies and traditions. On Christmas Day 1521, just four years after the

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Lutheran revolt began, Carlstadt celebrated Mass in the vernacular, discarded traditional vestments, and distributed Communion in both kinds. In less than a month, he married. In all of this revolutionary activity, he sought nothing less than to carry out the clear implications of Luther's radical teaching. What concerned Luther, however, was the *spirit* in which Carlstadt acted. Here was a man impatient with all externals in the faith, the prototype of the revolutionary willing to move quickly to overturn the delicate frame of the inherited social order on the basis of abstract principle. Carlstadt eagerly turned to the resources of his personal faith; indeed, he was convinced that he himself was a vehicle of divine truth. "The Spirit of God," he said, "to which all things ought to be subjected, cannot be subject even to Scripture." In Carlstadt, the individual conscience became the sole criterion of faith.

Luther recoiled. He saw Carlstadt as the first in a frightening line of radical reformers, a general in a dangerous new army of religious subjectivists. In 1525 he wrote: "That which God has made a matter of inward faith and spirit they convert into a human work. But what God has ordained as an outward word and sign and work they convert into an inner spirit." Carlstadt, said Luther, was a child of the Devil.

As in much of Luther's theology, so in the matter of the Devil, we stand before a dialectic. Luther is fighting the Devil on two fronts. On the one hand, the Devil is the contemptuous trickster who seeks to divert the believer from the simple essentials of faith and so catch him in a tangled web of visual images and mediating structures, the ultimate effect of which is confusion, illusion, and the cheapening of faith. Against this work of the Devil, the Christian is called to a life of independent maturity (*fides explicata*). On the other hand, the Devil is for Luther the motivating spiritual force of subjective fanaticism, teaching men falsely to trust their rational powers and cast aside the objective means of word, sacrament, and doctrine that God provides to guide the life of faith. In the craftiness of the Evil One, these two fronts easily become one. If this happens, then the dialectic that we find in Luther's theology collapses. The results can be disastrous.

It is precisely this sorry course that history took. The religious subjectivists of the Age of Reform—those new soldiers of the Devil whom Luther feared—seized upon the reformer's criticism of religious superstition to attack indiscriminately all external modes of faith, thus reducing Christian faith to the autonomous Self.

How this happened is an involved process. Luther himself is an essential part of the story. His own polemical attack on the theological inheritance of the Roman Church resulted in a social upheaval of unprecedented proportions. Steven Ozment tells us that the Reformation aimed its sights at "a host of traditional beliefs, practices, and institutions that touched directly the daily life of large numbers of people." As he points out, the reformers consigned to the Devil such things as mandatory fasting; auricular confession; the veneration of saints, relics, and images; indulgences, pilgrimages, shrines, wakes, and processions for the dead; traditional ceremonies, festivals, and holidays; monastic orders; the Latin Mass in public and private worship; the sacramental status of ordination, confirmation, penance, marriage, and extreme unction; the authority of canon law.

Whatever abuses attended these practices in late medieval Europe, the fact remains that they had been the "sacred canopy" for medieval life, providing it with meaning and security. In territories that sided with the Reformation, they were swept away within two decades. People who had known no change for centuries were now forced to experience the iron fist of Protestant desacralization and "disenchantment" of the world. Religious man stood naked before divine grace and judgment. He now had to live between God and the Devil without the communal protection of rituals and intermediaries that had served to order and regulate the confrontation.

To challenge people to live this way is to ask nearly the impossible. Martin Buber once wrote, "Man desires to have God; he desires to have God continually in space and time. He is loath to be satisfied with the inexpressible confirmation of the meaning; he wants to see it spread out as something that one can take out and handle again and again—a continuum unbroken in space and time that insures life for him at every point and moment." In breaking the continuum of God's presence in ritual and custom—and in making the break so harshly—the Reformation assaulted the wellsprings of human religiosity. This attack exacted a heavy price.

As scholars such as Keith Thomas and Norman Cohn have ably documented, it did not take long for matters to spin out of control and move in directions that Luther (or, for that matter, Zwingli or Calvin) could not have imagined. In England, for example, John Jewell, Bishop of Salisbury and intellectual leader of the reforming party, began describing all formal prayer and ceremony in the Church of England in sarcastic terms as the "scenic apparatus" of the faith. Jeremy Taylor, Anglican bishop and Vice Chancellor of Dublin University, looked down his nose at the faith of Irish peasants, asserting that they "give no account of their religion, what it is: only they believe as their priest bids them, and go to mass which they understand not, and reckon their beads to tell the number and the tale of their prayers." This type of elitist

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contempt is evidence that educated Protestants of the time were confirmed not only in the ways of the new theology, but also in the vanity of the autonomous Self who assumed superior intelligence and breeding over against the common run of mankind.

This haughty spiritual attitude spawned an even more vicious rhetoric. Henry Barrow, a radical Puritan separatist, began referring to Elizabethan clergymen as "Egyptian enchanters." Other separatists commonly denounced formal worship of the Prayer Book as "witchcraft" or "sorcery." By the mid-seventeenth century, an Essex Anabaptist could even declare that "none but witches and sorcerers . . . say the Lord's Prayer." The Devil was now thought to control all the externals of religious practice. He filled the imagination of reforming activists. In the maelstrom of the Wars of Religion that raged for a century, engulfing all the major nation-states of Europe, the search for Satan and his cohorts became an obsession. Witches were found in every city and hamlet and burned without mercy at the stake.

The Roman Church was by no means free from being part of this sad tale. From the time of the Albigensian heresy, it had demonized its enemies and persecuted them through the formidable apparatus of the Inquisition. The Italian historian Carlo Ginzburg has argued that the charge of Devil worship was used ideologically by Rome to secure control of remote rural villages that drew upon pagan lore and ritual to interpret the change of seasons and agricultural rhythms. By interrogating, coercing, and torturing poor villagers, the Inquisition turned this innocent use of pagan custom into a mountain of testimony supporting the charge of satanic worship. In 1486, two Dominican inquisitors, at the encouragement of Pope Innocent VIII, published a handbook of demonic activity based on this testimony: the *Malleus Malificarum*. This forbidding tome (a staple in tales of terror and horror movies to the present day) added the legitimacy of scholastic theological inquiry to the witch hunt.

It was the Protestant assault, however, with its severe dislocation of beliefs, practices, and institutions that plunged Europe over the edge into the full fury of the great European witch craze. As Hugh Trevor-Roper observes, "The years 1550-1600 were worse than the years 1500-1550, and the years 1600-1650 were worse still. . . . By 1630 the slaughter had broken all previous records."

History is filled with many cruel and bitter ironies. One of the worst is that the Age of Reform led to the witch craze. Estimating the total number of "witches" burned at the stake is a precarious business, but individual studies reveal startling statistics. In the Swiss Canton of Vaud 3,371 persons were tried and, without exception, put to death between 1591 and 1680. In the small town of Wiesenstieg in southwest Germany, sixty-three women were executed in the year 1562 alone. The extent of the suffering and madness can only be imagined.

By the end of the seventeenth century, the peculiar form of religious passion that the witch craze represented exhausted itself. The last of the witch trials took place in Salem, Massachusetts in 1692. Barely five years later, on January 14, 1697, Samuel Sewall, one of the Puritan judges at the infamous trials, publicly recanted of his sins on a Fast Day decreed by the General Court to expiate the tragedy of the entire affair. Standing in his pew and facing his fellow parishioners in South Church, Sewall had the following confession read: "Samuel Sewall, sensible of the reiterated strokes of God upon himself and family; and being sensible, that as to the Guilt contracted . . . he is, upon many accounts, more concerned than any that he knows of, Desires to take the Blame and Shame of it, Asking pardon of Men, And especially desiring prayers that God, who has an Unlimited Authority, would pardon that Sin and all other his Sins; personal and Relative: And according to his infinite Benignity, and Soveraignty, Not Visit the Sin of him, or of any other, upon himself or any of his, nor upon the Land."

What is the lesson of this terrible episode? Is it that the Devil has no place in the Christian vocabulary? This is what the Deists of the Enlightenment declared. The witch craze had taught them nothing about the dangers of desacralization and reliance on the autonomous Self. On the contrary, they were confirmed in these convictions. The way to attack the problem of religious passion, they thought, was to continue the relentless process of reducing religious claims. In carrying out this task, the Deists saw themselves as guardians of the authentic Protestant heritage. As Gotthold Ephraim Lessing said: "The true Lutheran does not wish to be defended by Luther's writings but by Luther's spirit; and Luther's spirit absolutely requires that no man may be prevented from advancing in the knowledge of the truth according to his own judgment." In the cunning of history, Luther and Carlstadt had become one.

The Deists' renunciation of the Devil soon led to the denial of his existence. The spiritual world was depopulated and God stood alone, his truth made known by the powers of rational man. The dialectic of Luther's theology had totally collapsed. As Mary Douglas notes, the "new, bare monotheism" inevitably led to "an intellectualized religion," whose most prominent feature was its inability to give ultimate meaning to the joys and agonies of human existence. The Deists, after all, founded no enduring style of ecclesial life and soon passed into historical memory. As for their spiritual heirs in

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liberal Protestantism, they have come to preside mostly over the restricted territories of mainline denominational bureaucracies and the Kingdom of Academia. Douglas also points out that the denial of the Devil was hardly a momentous breakthrough in the world of religious thought. In fact, it is little more than a curious, provincial feature of Western culture: "From the standpoint of a universal theology, considering that in other parts of the Christian world Satan has full accreditation, [this denial has] registered as a strictly local shift."

While the denial of the Devil may have saved the West from another witch craze, it has not spared it from the demonic will to undo. The cool rationalism of the Enlightenment gave birth to the irrational terror of the French Revolution, a political nightmare whose consequences we have suffered for two hundred years. The triumph of reason had disarmed reason. While reason preoccupied itself with particular causes, faults, and errors in the social arrangements of mankind, while it tinkered with tyrants, scandals, and the ambitions of nation-states, it ignored the spiritual depth and oneness of the *mysterium iniquitas*. In the last two centuries, we have ever and again proclaimed a new order of being. When evil erupts, in its obscure but organized and relentless way, we are dumbfounded. "The Devil's cleverest wile," said Baudelaire, "is to convince us that he does not exist."

Denis de Rougemont in his classic little book from the 1940s, *The Devil's Share*, has identified the cost of living in a desacralized world of the Deist God and the dead Devil. We have limited our understanding of reality to objective facts, he says, that are nothing but isolated pieces of information. We seek to connect these facts by general laws of reason but the problem is that such laws cover isolated portions of reality. We have mathematical laws, economic laws, biological laws, etc., that only serve to fragment the affective, moral, and spiritual planes of human experience. Our common religious heritage once unified our lives. Now that this heritage has been severely restricted, there is no "custodian of general meaning" to guide us. It is no wonder that modern reason has made anxiety and irrationalism its constant companions: "When it claims to deny the existence or urgency of the common measure which it cannot conceive, reason leads us to folly through the gate of incoherence. The chaos in which we find ourselves bears witness to this."

Despite this dismal record, there have been occasional rays of hope. Motivated in part by the horrors of two world wars, prominent theologians of the neoorthodox era began gingerly to poke around the edges of biblical witness to the Devil. As Emil Brunner put it: "It is just because our generation has experienced such diabolical wickedness that many people have abandoned their former 'enlightened' objection to the existence of a 'power of darkness,' and are now prepared to believe in Satan as represented in the Bible." Karl Barth spoke of "the peculiar existence of nothingness," the power of "the null and void" to wreak havoc on human affairs. Of all the theologians of this generation, however, it is probably Paul Tillich who entered most deeply into the question that Luther had posed: Christian existence between God and the Devil.

In 1926 Tillich published an essay entitled "The Demonic." To the end of his life, it remained one of his favorite works. Tillich argues that since the Enlightenment, modern man has embraced a reductive materialism in his understanding of truth. This mind-set distrusts the imaginative and spiritual powers of thought. Among the frightening costs of this development is that it has left modernity morally disoriented. Only by recapturing a mythic consciousness that places man and the choices he makes before the perspective of eternity can the truth of history as the story of the consequences of human action be fully comprehended. This eternity involves "the dialectics of the divine and the demonic": "The real observation of history has to do with phenomena which are perceptible but in which the depth can manifest itself: the battle against the demonic, the powerful coming of 'salvation.' " The ground of mythic consciousness is its understanding that the roots of human existence may be traced to the warfare between the divine realm and demons. Human life is the battleground of good and evil in which all of nature is at stake. In particular, the demonic is the insight into the predicament of the human. It symbolizes evil precisely in the radical sense of being "the form-destroying eruption of the creative basis of things." The demonic is the relentless will to undo that reveals the tragic character of human history, its uncanny ability to destroy creatively—that is, to destroy in ever new ways.

There is an audacity in Tillich's proposal that borders on the heretical. It is typical of young Dialectical theologians of the 1920s who drank deeply of the heady, decadent atmosphere of Weimar culture. Tillich's essay is an effort to move from the bare, intellectualistic monotheism of liberal dogmatics to an understanding of existence between God and the Devil. In a desacralized modern world, no longer able to draw upon the resources of ritualized practice, his effort is confined to an intensely theological argument. Tillich wants nothing less than to recover a lost hermeneutical insight from the distant past in order to penetrate the shadow side of God's Word.

Tillich rejects scholarly convention that the Devil is the primitive externalization of dark aspects of

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human experience. Instead he claims that it is only through such externalization that the seriousness of the human condition is grasped. The Devil and his legions are not simply the ancient articulation of psychic states, but the authoritative witness to the hard reality of individual and corporate life. To take up the ancient myth of warfare between the divine and the demonic is to repossess the deep structures of reality before they were fragmented in the distinction of matter and spirit. It is to return to the custodian of general meaning that once ruled the West.

Tillich's insights can help us find our way through the thicket of biblical tradition. The Bible gives us no systematic Satanology. The heritage of Christian thought concerning the Devil is not determined by fixed doctrine. What we have instead are loosely formed teachings, characterized by a rich variety of metaphorical expression. This assortment of traditions has in common, however, the theme that Tillich identifies: the battle of God and the demonic. From the beginning of the Scriptures, as we have received them in their final canonical shape, there is opposition to God that is a dark reality. It is vague, unformed, multiple, intermediary; but it is nonetheless awesome and at war with the divine. It is met first in Genesis 1:2 as the *tohu va-vohu*—the "waste and void." This "abyss of formlessness," as Gerhard von Rad calls it, is a constant threat to faith and its trust in creation: "This second verse speaks not only of a reality that once existed in a preprimeval period but also of a possibility that always exists. Man has always suspected that . . . all creation is always ready to sink into the abyss of the formless; that the chaos, therefore, signifies simply the threat to everything created."

Ancient men and women were not beset by the self-centered subjectivity of the autonomous Self. They did not exaggerate the value of their finiteness and freedom, thus curving in upon themselves. Rather, in seeing existence as determined by the battle of sacred and demonic forces, they were constantly mindful that the Absolute intertwines with the events of time. This sense made life morally charged. Existence was an arena encompassing what Tillich calls "the quality of the 'beyond.'" Man knew that he stood before God's almighty throne. His actions were never neutral. On the contrary, they were either obedient or rebellious. This made life extraordinarily significant. (It is this experience of the significance attendant upon our acts, this weight, that has, along with a proper recognition of the Devil, departed from our lives—and left our children, alone and unprotected, at the mercy of MTV and everything it represents.)

In chapter 4, verses 23 to 26, Jeremiah chillingly describes the destruction of Jerusalem, which he saw as bringing to an end "the everlasting covenant" of the Davidic monarchy:

> I looked on the earth, and lo, it was waste
> and void;
> and to the heavens, and they had no light.
> I looked on the mountains, and lo, they were
> quaking,
> and all the hills moved to and fro.
> I looked, and lo, there was no man,
> and all the birds of the air had fled.
> I looked, and lo, the fruitful land was a desert,
> and all its cities were laid in ruins
> before the LORD, before his fierce anger.

Jeremiah, says Bernhard Anderson, faced squarely "a dimension of evil in history which cannot be explained on the basis of the covenant." He defined this evil as the powers of chaos that "lurk at the depth of God's creation," the same powers which the priestly writers would later perceive in their eloquent hymn to the beginning of all things in the first chapter of Genesis. Such dark powers cannot be overcome by reliance on ethical maxims. It is not enough to speak of the blessed man who "is like a tree planted by streams of water. . . . In all that he does, he prospers" (Ps. 1:3). The *tohu va-vohu* represents the tragedy of being, the rupture of creation that is beyond humanity to rationalize and control. It bursts the bonds of simple moralism.

Related to this new depth of prophetic understanding is what Jeffrey Burton Russell calls a "fault line" in the understanding of evil that begins to make itself felt in Hebrew faith: the emergence of Satan as malevolent personality. *Satan* is a Hebrew word that has to do with "opposition," "obstruction," "accusation." It can be used mundanely in the Scriptures as when, for example, King David faces opposition from the sons of Zeruiah: "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should this way be as an adversary (*satan*) to me?" (2 Sam. 19:22). But in the prophet Zechariah (3:1-2) and in the Book of Job (1:6-12), *satan* becomes a personified Adversary, a messenger of God (*mal'akh Yahweh*) whose nature it is to obstruct, test, and tempt the children of faith. In intertestamental literature, Satan grows to frightening proportions and is read back into the figure of the serpent in Genesis 3 and the *bene ha-elohim*—the "sons of God"—who consort with the women of the earth (Gen. 6:1-4). In the narrative of Genesis, the story of this mating leads immediately to Yahweh's rejection of the wickedness of man in the Flood. In the Book of Psalms (82:6-7), these same shadowy figures are interpreted as the fallen angels whom God casts out from his court:

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I say, "You are gods,
children of the Most High, all of you;
nevertheless, you shall die like mortals
and fall like any prince."

To the sophisticated reader of the Hebrew Bible, the development of the teaching on Satan might appear to be a naive symbolization of the demonic. Such a judgment is, I think, premature. The myth of Satan as the personified Adversary teaches that the force of evil is not simply abstract principle or intuition of the abyss. Satan witnesses to the power of evil as the power of malevolent personality that feeds on human freedom, pride, and ambition. He is a dreadful creative force that has as its purpose the will to undo. As Tillich says: "The demonic comes to fulfillment in personality and personality is the most prominent object of demonic destruction, for personality is the bearer of form in its totality and unconditional character." The Devil is the revelation both of the depth of human being in rebellion and the spiritual force of that rebellion itself.

There is no greater symbol of radical evil in history than the figure of the Devil as he develops in the Scriptures. He can neither be replaced nor demythologized. His myth must remain in place as his story is told and retold. He is so powerful a figure that he does not *precede* monotheism in the Hebrew Bible but *succeeds* it within the unfolding of Hebrew faith.

When we turn to Christianity, there is no question as to Satan's power. The malevolent personality of Satan underlies the New Testament narrative and is integral to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Indeed, from the perspective of comparative religion, New Testament Christianity appears to be a modified dualistic religion. To say any less is, in the words of Russell, to violate "the essence of Christianity."

We first meet Satan in the wilderness, where dark spirits dwell. He tempts Christ with unconditional desires (Mt. 4:3-9): he demands material goods ("turn these stones into bread"); he wants Jesus to test God to insure divine love ("throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will give his angels charge of you'"); he offers prestige and power ("All these things I will give you if you will fall down and worship me"). Satan is no haphazard force, but organized for destruction. His kingdom battles the kingdom of Christ (Mk. 3:23-27 and parallels). It is over against Satan that the promise of the Gospel emerges in the full scope of its struggle: "For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12). Although Satan is an ultimate menace to mankind, he will not finally triumph: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:35, 37-39). Only in the awareness of our existence between God and the Devil does the full force of this Pauline affirmation reach us. It is no wonder that this passage is used to comfort the sorrowful at Christian funerals.

These reflections are meant only as a modest primer on the Devil. Their purpose is to encourage the proclamation of faith in relation to the concrete particulars of daily life. I have no metaphysical umbrella with which to cover my theology. When it comes to the Devil, metaphysics has never worked very well. In the history of Christian thought, Manichean dualism and Neoplatonic reflections on the *privatio boni* have been the most serious efforts. The former leads to outright heresy; the latter fails before the malevolence of the will to undo.

I also can provide no theodicy to bolster my reflections. Indeed, I must confess that theodicy has always left me cold; the preoccupation with theodicy that has been characteristic of Western theology since the beginning of the eighteenth century seems to me to have served largely to sanitize God. Too often, it is little more than a vain effort to save his Holy Name for "the good things that happen to good people." In the peculiar form that theodicy takes in Process theology—a popular movement in American theology for over two decades—the Deity is reduced to a demiurge and accident is elevated to a theological principle.

I am convinced that God speaks out of the whirlwind against both metaphysics and theodicy: "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?" (Job 38:4). We are born between the beginning and the end. We see through a mirror darkly. We are menaced, to be sure; yet we trust that we are saved. In short, we live between God and the Devil. To try to live otherwise brings confusion and disaster. To seek to know more than we can know is to succumb to the temptation that we can be "like gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5). We are not meant to have such knowledge; to aspire to it is the first bite of the fruit of sin.

This is not to say that the Bible withholds knowledge from us. Scripture contains a rich inheritance, both in its light and shadow. It guides us in interpreting our lives under the weight of eternity. This is enough for any human life.

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The Inescapability of Metaphysics

Marion Montgomery

The purpose of the study of philosophy is not to learn what others have thought, but to learn how the truth of things stands.
—St. Thomas Aquinas

We as academicians are "lovers of wisdom" first and last, and should we not be so, we would be serving under false pretenses as professors of higher education. To love wisdom is not, of course, to be wise, as if our beginning were our end. To love wisdom is to desire and labor toward wisdom through the gifts of intellect, each according to his gifts. Without that enveloping desire, whatever our speciality, we are at best technicians and not teachers.

What we discover instead at this moment of our history, and virtually in any place, is a chaos of thought and action disturbing as never before to "higher education." We are required, therefore, to conduct ourselves in the fashion of Thomas Aquinas. Not, to be sure, that we possess his peculiar gifts—would that we did—but we are obligated to commit ourselves to his openness to the truth of things. This is something we may do as theologians or philosophers or poets or scientists or administrators or whatever our particular calling. The diversity of gifts, St. Thomas points out, answers to the diversity of the truth of things, which are themselves diverse actualities. In respect to the diversity of gifts, there attends no significance of virtue in the calling, only in the answer we give by our action. Within complex reality, the truth suited to our particular gift is to be found, and seeking it, then, becomes our calling.

And in the discrete soul's exercise of the gift of its calling, it is the intellect of that soul which out of its own depths most immediately answers the calling. That alone makes *intelligence* the true soul-food on the soul's journeying. By *intelligence* here I mean truth possessed by intellect, in which respect St. Thomas says of it that truth is the "good of the intellect."

It was not long ago reported to us by that complacent guardian of the popular mind, *Time* magazine, the promise of a new homunculus such as must make human intellect outmoded in the very next moment. "Artificial Intelligence," popularly recognized as AI, is now a sign as common to us as $E=MC^2$ or DNA. But AI is now so advanced, *Time* reports with excitement, as to require a new term: "Artificial Life." Now, largely because the term *life* is so indecisive a term in our decade that no one seems to know what it means, the attempts at definition are increasingly debated, but less often with words than through radical physical action and counteractions under various banners such as *abortion* or *euthanasia*.

As for this artificial life, first advanced as artificial intelligence, one might take some comfort, though not much, from Roger Penrose's recent book, *The Emperor's New Mind*, subtitled *Concerning Computers, Minds, and the Laws of Physics*. Penrose calls the question on presumptions about artificial life and he does so from his authority as physicist. Even if one is uncomfortable with the position from which he calls the question, it is the right question. (I suggest, with mischief intent, but not malice prepense, that he might profit from "three or four books on metaphysics," as Keats realized he might possibly do.) Penrose's own premise is his acceptance on faith of evolutionist theory as the central truth about being, as revealed by finite intellect,

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though he recognizes a degree of confusion in that theory, which confusion he takes to be occasioned by its use of "anthropomorphic terms." Still, he is willing to accept them metaphorically, he says. We must observe that his reading of metaphor as analogy is that of attribution, which is to say an assignment of likeness in unlike things made by finite intellect, and not seen as intrinsic to the things compared. One might even suppose that Penrose, like some modernist poets—for instance, Ezra Pound or William Carlos Williams—intuitively recognizes that the anthropomorphic language he holds suspect is suspect precisely because it is attributive, though often supposed by unwary poets to be merely descriptive of reality. Both Pound and Williams are cautious about metaphor.

Using attributive metaphor, the scientist flirts with fancy, as Penrose fears he may be doing, escaping the inherent difficulty by asserting it to be "merely metaphor" and so not to be taken too seriously by rational intellect. But even Penrose's argument depends upon attributive analogy in support of his faith in evolutionary determinism, an analogy whose ultimate source is finite intellect. One may well conclude, therefore, that his faith is quintessentially founded in anthropomorphism, whether expressed metaphorically or not. Indeed, how could it be otherwise? In that intellectual position, metaphor aside, what is supposed is that the actuality of that being which St. Thomas defends—man as intellectual creature—is only the actuality of a machine, a body-mind, the cause of which is ambiguous at best. For at the heart of Penrose's faith is his commitment to existence as mechanistic, though it is evident he is uncomfortable in that faith.

It is also out of this same anthropomorphic but significantly modernist faith, however, that the definition of *life* is made to fit the term *artificial intelligence*, whose promise to the popular mind seems to be our final release from the residue in our thought associated with the "puritan work ethic." What a happy slave—this Artificial Life! And our possessing this "artificial life" absolves us of guilt over our possessiveness. I say *guilt*, a more acceptable term because anchored in the history of mankind, in the errors of our immediate fathers and not in our nature as fallen persons. Historical error bears psychological effect, suited to expiation by the therapy of action. By such good work one expiates oneself, with a little help from one's friendly therapist. *Sin*, on the other hand, if taken as actual, suggests circumstances to the soul beyond self-expiation. Above all, we must set aside Original Sin. That is what less enlightened ages spoke of, not being so advanced as we in psychological intricacies.

So, then, what a happy slave this artificial life will make, justifying us as happy master over nature. It is obviously not really a *person*—even that term an outmoded concept, though still haunting to us because entangled in historical guilt. It is rather a mere mechanism. Therefore we may, without guilt, take pleasure in lording it over this new slave, toward accomplishing what the president of a state university recently charged his faculty to pursue: "We must," he said, "find a way to reprogram nature." Since this new species of "life" is freed of personhood, we may exercise a tyranny over it, and through it, and at the same time, be freed of any sense of guilt, let alone of sin.

Still, it is at least an artificial *life*; who could take pleasure in lording it over a mere mechanism? Not even the old discarded Christian God could be content with that relationship to his made creature, man. Such is the tempting mode of our modernist conduct toward existence by gnostic intellect self-transformed beyond reality. Until a recognition comes: in such an arrogant power through pride, the fundamental effect of this gnostic intellectual action is to reduce man himself, even the man commanding the new homunculus. Such is the consequence foretold by C. S. Lewis in *The Abolition of Man*, and *Time* celebrates our having virtually accomplished that abolition.

Whether in Penrose's assumption of our nature as evolved or the assumption of the advocates of "artificial life" whom he questions, actual life is put in jeopardy by the submission of the mystery of life to the limits of mechanistic thought. Modernist thought is so weakly founded in the mystery of life as each person knows it—knows it because he *experiences* it—that abortion and euthanasia must be acceptable forms of process to the popular mind, if that gnostic director of public opinion triumphs and in that triumph engineers the final fillip in the abolition of man. This is, to be sure, a serious, even apocalyptic, assertion. It is intended to underline the point central to our recovery of ordered thought. For *ordered thought in relation to truth* is the principal responsibility of higher education. What we here recognize, then, is that the *meaning* asserted in our words is the turning point to intellectual action. And that must take us at last back to our responsibility as intellectual creatures, whose governance the popular mind conceded long ago to institutions of higher education. After which that community progressively abandoned its own responsibility: let the academics *teach*, we the community will *do*; theirs the *words*, ours the *action*. This was a dangerous concession, because words prove always the most decisive action of intellect.

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II

Modern linguistics, as Etienne Gilson shows us in his *Linguistics and Philosophy*, assumes the authority of science, but it is able to do so only by denying meaning to our assertions—to our signs, our words. It is thus, through this late manifestation of Nominalism, that modernist linguistics serves as handmaiden, knowingly or not, to the advocates of artificial life. And artificial life does not simply become established as our slave, but itself becomes the means whereby we are in turn enslaved to gnostic ideology. For artificial life then is posited to be the idol of man as a perfection of mechanistic being, to which we are commanded to turn in worship. As idol, artificial life is a dead sign, but the death it reflects is the spiritual death of its perpetrator and its patrons. But such is the reality of actual creation, including even that of wayward man himself, that the meaning in sign (even this meaning of death in the idol of artificial life), like life in animate creatures, persists. And in persisting, it contradicts the meaninglessness asserted by Nominalist linguistics, which asserts emphatically through its own signs that signs have no meaning. Such is the entrapment of Nominalism by reality, though the consequences of this self-entrapment often takes long to recognize, let alone remedy.

It is the remedying of this nonsense with sense, this meaninglessness paraded as meaning, that becomes the first elementary task to those intellects whose calling is a service to the community of mankind through offices of higher education. For the question is not whether signs bear meaning—they do so inescapably—but whether the meaning they bear signifies reality, whether they speak a truth held in the thought of the sign-bearer. The sign is always a present witness, either to a truth or to a falsehood. The steadying point of departure for the mind that loves and seeks truth is to realize first of all this truth about our words. For if we bear false witness, the consequence of that false witness is likely to be unfortunate to community, whether such false witness is the work of a scoundrel or only a fool. To this point Gilson says: "It is truly from the meaning that all difficulties in linguistics are born, just as in biology the most serious difficulties come from the obtrusive idea of 'life,' which does not explain anything, but calls attention to that without which the biologist would have nothing to explain." T. S. Eliot, intent on the same discovery about the relation of the word to the reality that yields truth as the proper good of intellect, puts this continuing struggle of "life" in man as a struggling continuum of thought engaging signs:

> Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,
> Every poem an epitaph. And any action
> Is a step to the block, to the fire, down the sea's throat
> Or to an illegible stone: and that is where we start.

For a while yet, the shock delivered through extremes of attributive analogy, attributive metaphor, may stay somewhat that process of the erosion of meaning. One at least aborts flawed design if one is to succeed on the assembly line, even though one may also encourage the throw-away life "style" which at this moment is strangling the social body within the waste of "life's" technological processes. Still, a focus of this problem of attributive analogy as destructive of reality we witnessed recently: our attention upon artificial hearts, which was an attention at once disturbed and fascinated. The whole of that evolutionary faith, which is actually a fundamentalist faith supporting most of our intellectual community, turns necessarily upon a limited anthropomorphic metaphor. The problem with such metaphor is that obtrusive truth, truth that derives from existence itself, is deeper than the shallow level of such anthropomorphism. The artificial heart is not a heart, and we know it. Nor do we need a degree in biology to recognize the disparity.

Truth is both persistently and insistently abiding, as deep as being itself, so that thought may not in the end avoid engaging that which it knows, the truth it possesses intellectually, though it may deny the possession—a fatal refusal. Being is fundament to discrete existences, whose recognition by intellect has been progressively denied through attributive manipulations of the accidents of being in an attempt by gnostic intellect to dominate being itself. I speak here of the residual subversiveness of Nominalism in modern thought. In its most immediate aspect, intentionality as the gnostic's way of energizing intellect to action is effected by his will, whose precise object, as Eric Voegelin says, is to establish power over being. But the justification of this intentionality requires a reductionist faith in other actual intellects as separate from the reductionist's. The irony is that such an intellect does not recognize the larger mystery of its own existence, which deterministic evolution cannot explain. Such, however, is the deportment of the activist gnostic intellect. And it would impose its reductionist account of the mystery of life upon the whole of creation, excepting itself, as if creation were itself immanently intentional. It imposes a pseudo-paganism, which hovers at the moment about the latest holy of holies: the gene. In this new faith, genes are somehow most magically committed as intentional, having succeeded Pan and Artemis and Venus and Mars. We have proposed by such science that genes are somehow concerned

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about their own propagation, desperate to maintain their own immortality, even at the expense of their environmental habitat, the discrete body of this person. One needs no Sartre as theologian for the gene's justification. The gene will serve itself well enough as explicated by the latest laboratory tests.

Attributive anthropomorphism, refined as genetic ideology, is increasingly pervasive of our new collective thought, namely environmentalism, in which "Nature" becomes its own self-realizing god. Increasingly, man is concluded to be an infection of that god's body, an infection of the environment: except for man, that world would still be an Eden. One notices how often the myth of Eden creeps back into television's "nature" programs in which the infection-bearer himself explores remote corners of the earth where an Eden still is perceived to linger, at least until the arrival of the camera. To point to such sentimentality as an extension of "science" is at once to be misunderstood, as if to point to this falseness in a new species of intellectual ideology, which is now largely supported by popular sentiment, were to become thereby an advocate of ravenous exploitation of the world's body. As if one were thereby sworn enemy to reality itself—a response which more than any underlines the task waiting upon Thomistic realism. For if I declare this new ideology to be only partial and not an inclusive vision, and so insufficiently a vision of all of reality, I risk either the wrath or the ridicule of embarrassed emperors in the kingdom of genes.

Such companions of St. Thomas as remain are challenged to a mutual concern for the truth of how things stand in this present moment, buffeted as that necessity is by conflicting notions that yield false visions of reality when not anchored by our intellectual responsibility to the fullness of reality. At this moment, a casual righteousness pervades the secular intellectual community. Its faith rests in a new deterministic evolutionism whose mystery is the gene and whose method is Artificial Intelligence, in concert leading to "Artificial Life." The difficulty to the companion to Thomas will be his ordinate regard for mechanisms, genetic or electronic. For the central problem lies not in the knowledge afforded by such discoveries as those which every day multiply out of the virtues exercised by genetic scientists or computer whizzes; these provide fruits suited to sustain intellect on its journey, depending upon our intellect's digestive powers. The central problem lies rather in what is made of such knowledge in an age when knowledge is mistaken as understanding, and a partial understanding is extrapolated as if it were wisdom.

III

The immediate task for the companions of Thomas, then, is the making of such distinctions; which is to say, the task requires a rescue of metaphysics for the laborious pursuit of wisdom. The intellect that mistakes knowledge as understanding and understanding as wisdom, by that very miss-taking at least bears witness to a continuing desire for understanding and wisdom. This is a condition justifying hope. One already sees certain attempts toward such recovery. There is, for example, the continuing work of Stanley L. Jaki, which has appeared in such books as *Road of Science and the Ways of God* and *The Origin of Science and the Science of Origin*. There are Gilson's works, especially two late ones recently made available in English translation by John Lyon: *Linguistics and Philosophy: An Essay on the Philosophical Constants of Language* and *From Aristotle to Darwin and Back Again: A Journey in Final Causality, Species, and Evolution*. One could compile a considerable bibliography reflecting recent concern to recover a metaphysical view of reality.

What such thinkers have in common—and there are among us powerful thinkers more numerous than have been named—is the recognition that in order to restore intellect to its proper offices, we must recover metaphysics. We must do so, if we are to come to terms with such abiding challenges to intellect as that of meaning in words and life in bodies. Once more, Gilson bears witness to the necessity. The gist of his argument, meticulously presented, is that we know, and know that we know, that life and meaning have real existence, though science can not substantiate that reality because it lies in a dimension of immateriality. Such knowledge baffles "pure" science. "All that is physically real," he says, "is material and particular." But the universal, to the contrary,

> whose nature we are seeking to understand, is immaterial by definition. It is necessary, therefore, that that which produces it ought to be equally immaterial if one does not wish its production to be quasi-miraculous. But the order of the immaterial, of the nonphysical, is precisely that of the metaphysical. Language, therefore, involves the reality of the metaphysical by the very fact that it involves an element of universality.

Gilson's is a recognition, let us add, which requires our understanding that language is not fully explicable through any science. As Gilson says at another point, "Whether the linguist wishes it or not, [even] grammar is philosophy."

This order of the immaterial reality that concerns Gilson is inescapably the arena within which those

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concerned with higher education are by their calling itself made to dwell. One cannot even deny the existence of that arena without speaking, Gilson says, and that act of speaking attests to the reality of the immaterial. That inescapable condition to intellect, he adds,

> is the witness in us of the reality of metaphysics. Although entirely legitimate in itself, the existence of general linguistics raises most serious philosophical difficulties. These result precisely from the fact that one cannot make the physics of language correspond to the metaphysics of thought. . . . The *Nous* [the mind or intellect] creates distinction through language and is itself neither distinct nor confused, but anterior.

And from that recognition, the mystery of language itself devolves. For though there is a materiality to speech that may be measured, so that we speak the word in decibels even as we speak of the *word*, which is an immaterial but actual thing, the "meaning of the word escapes servitude to space, for it is an act of thought, and thought exists, but in a literal sense it has no place."

> Every truth is such. And so it proves inevitable that language should lead us back once more to the threshold of the immaterial and of the metaphysical. Everything leads to it: biology, as soon as it admits that there are living forms; noetics and epistemology, as soon as they reflect upon the conditions required, by the object known as well as by the subject knowing, in order that science might be possible; linguistics itself, as soon as one accepts language in its relations with the understanding, of which it is at one and the same time the body and the means of exchange. It is difficult not to recognize the presence of metaphysics, even if one refuses to engage it.

Such is the context of intellectual action, even if we refuse to engage it, in those special territories set aside by the social body to be devoted to higher education, the academies. It remains so whether one's special responsibility is defined in relation to the atomic table or biotechnology or grammar and logic and rhetoric. I recall a remark by that great teacher Donald Davidson, made many years ago. We begin with a class of green students, he said, attempting to teach them the agreement of subject and verb, the importance of clear pronoun reference. And then pretty soon we find ourselves wrestling with them to save their very souls. So suspect is that term *soul* to our secular age that it may be necessary for us to recast the point. Let us at least say that as patrons of intellect, which is the fundamental justification of institutions of higher education, in teaching grammar or physics or chemistry or biology we are wrestling to recover to the student his potential as an intellectual creature. It is this primary responsibility that the academy has abandoned, and the effect of this abandonment is everywhere inescapable—nowhere more patently than in the collapse of the intellectual community, however much we may rationalize the process through a sentimentality in favor of pluralism.

The responsibility of intellect in community: how easily we escape it through pseudo-rationalizations justifying a plurality of intellect by denying the reality of truth itself. We have systematized the justification, as in most of the current arguments for "multiculturalism" or for a "politically correct" deportment as a legalistic substitute for good manners. In doing so, we but establish the mechanisms of alienation and establish those mechanisms as the required principle of higher education. The clamor for the right to "do one's own thing" that rose in the 1960s becomes now, not a revolt against the establishment, but the new establishment itself, against which intellect is increasingly required to make a radical revolt. The alternative, alas, is the prospect of community itself as constituted only of an individual, isolated intellect. One is left to commune with oneself.

The dream of such an absolute freedom, put in traditional terms, is the dream of becoming like the gods, as the old serpent encouraged Eve to dream. The consequence must be that isolation which we have lamented for a century now under the title of "alienation." The accidents attending the disintegration of community, whether in the family, or the society, or in educational institutions, increasingly terrify us. That the terrors are justified needs only our recalling the fundamental cause, which John Milton caught in lines that could serve well as the motto of our political state, itself in turn representative of a secular civilization in rapid decline. They are the lines from *Paradise Lost* spoken by Satan after God has flung him into Hell:

> The mind is its own place and of itself
> Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

As philosophers, we must divide those words in quest of the simple truth. With Gilson we say that, indeed, the mind is its own place—or rather let us say that the mind *has* no place. For that is the more nearly accurate putting of the truth, whereby we avoid the presumption of a declaration, as if the placelessness of mind were determined by our own "creative" assertion through the "being" verb. Given the truth of this mystery whereby man *is*—that is to say exists by nature as intellectual crea-

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ture—the very freedom of placeless, timeless mind becomes mind's greatest temptation. We know from experience that mind is a reality, despite its being immaterial. It exists, though undifferentiated by time or space whereby it might be sensually perceived, leaving us with only the brain as a temporal, spatial organ closest to our struggle to perceive mind sensually. But if it is an immaterial reality, its immateriality does not therefore make it infinite, nor are its powers over time and place sufficient for its full comprehension of, and justification of, existential reality, either that of its own or that of other existences whether material or immaterial. Therefore it cannot *make* a heaven of hell nor hell of heaven, despite all the utopian attempts strewn through our history, especially those recent ones from Robespierre to Joseph Stalin and Adolf Hitler.

Mind, then, is always—this side worldly death—in an in-between context to its being. But that as intellectual community we presume otherwise is inescapable. Eric Voegelin names this presumption of mind as self-empowered to transcendence: it is "modern gnosticism." What we presume, in this gnostic stance, explicitly or tacitly, is that mind transcends reality by its own action, rather than being included in reality despite this illusion of transcendence by its own will. But reality, both material and immaterial, emerges from an enveloping, causal Love—from I AM THAT I AM, from Being Itself. Modern gnosticism is but a recent version of a most ancient heretical act.

IV

To recover intellect from its gnostic delusions about reality—that is the pressing task for the academic mind, and the task is first of all the recovery of *my own intellect* from such inclinations. So formidable is this task, it is little wonder that it may seem an impossible one, until we remember that it was ever thus. We only think the task more pressing upon us, think ourselves exceptional in history, because it is we who must *now*, in this present moment, deal with a responsibility. Our first step is to realize that by the accidents of existence this moment *happens* to be ours, by the grace of our existing at all. Otherwise, we should declare all history to be concentrated in this moment—as if our intellectual nature were a determined point on history's continuum. That would be to lose our purchase as created souls in that country of the immaterial which Gilson reminds us of, without which neither life nor thought has meaning. But in consequence of the loss of the concepts of life and thought as being beyond material existence, neither would such a concept as history or community have meaning. Nor will any of those attempts to name high concerns, once held to be realities—truths possessed by intellect and given meaning through our words. We must then, at best, be left with pragmatic—though deterministically inevitable—ethics, but with no moral virtues oriented by the possibility of Beatitude, in which term (beatitude) the *be* speaks our hope of a perfection of our being, beyond our finite dream but not beyond our realistic hope.

To say that this is our moment by the accident of our existence is to be reminded that what we call the historical context to our intellectual quest for the truth of things is the proximate occasion of confusion to our thoughts about ultimate things. Through such confusion, we mistake mediate for ultimate ends of intellectual actions. We become divided, such is our limit as created intellect, between actions relative to mediate ends and to ultimate ones. Which means we have, as the most decisive concern to our intellectual action as full persons, the task of coming to terms with a relativism anchored in our own given nature. This relativism is one consequent upon our finitude, which means that we are limited with respect to truth as it exists in its absolute source—in that I AM, which is Being Itself.

The point must be emphasized, since for some centuries now we have increasingly been given to relativism of another kind, i.e., the gnostic kind, whereby truth is conceived as something parceled out relatively from the "absolute" position of finite intellect itself. This position is possible only from the assumption that finite intellect transcends truth itself, as opposed to the position that is proper to finite intellect, through which that truth becomes the good of such intellect but in the measure suited precisely to its limits as finite. The distinction at issue here is most important, though most difficult to make clear through words bearing truth. For mind depends upon—depends from—truth, and not truth from mind. The distinction is important because as we come to understand it, we are at last enabled to address mediate and final ends proportionately, without refusing either or neglecting either. The point recognized requires a prayerful vigilance, which T. S. Eliot dramatizes in "Ash-Wednesday" in his prayer "teach us to care and not to care." Teach us to engage the mediate circumstances without concluding, by the action of our own engagement, that they are our final end.

The present context of our existential life, then, imposes a certain necessity but also a limit to that necessity, inasmuch as we are called to engage mediating circumstances. We are created free, but existence itself implies limits to our freedom. We are called to engage existence in this present moment while at the same time not to suppose it our ultimate calling. This is to say, by way of recovering hope in a dark moment, that our present moment *as* history is not ours to redeem. Such is

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not the final, nor the proper, end to our intellectual action, though we may not be indifferent to quotidian necessities. Our ultimate end is the salvation of our own discrete, specific soul fulfilled of its potential being. We must care, and we must do what we are both able and enabled to do *in the circumstances*. I remember one of the most moving epitaphs I've ever encountered, carved on the tombstone of a beloved wife, in a cemetery in Crawford, Georgia: "She done what she could." That is what we may pray will be our own epitaph at last—even after a sojourn in the academy, over whose doors there seems at the moment to be engraved the message: "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here."

Hope, in the academy, as everywhere else, abides so long as we remember that our true country lies always in an immaterial dimension of our created existence—even though we become threatened in our own actions with an entrapment in history. Our uncertainty about how it is necessary for us to conduct ourselves as relativists of the truth, by which we are able both to care very much and at the same time not care too much, inescapably follows on our recognition of that timeless, placeless dimension of our being which may at last be beyond the accidents of our history, those accidents recorded by dates and even, perhaps, by the words, "He (or she) done what he (she) could."

The high cause of higher education, then, is never a lost cause, any more than it is ever a won cause. But within our acceptance of these conditions to the relative nature of our intellectual gifts, we will find that our good is always supplied at the level of how things stand in truth, in other words, the standing of the *thing* in itself, within an encircling, enveloping reality of existential creation. And so it is that we recognize what is hopeful within those otherwise disturbing words that speak always to our present moment: "Sufficient unto the day are the evils thereof."

Now, lest it seem as if hope were to be left with the worldly shadow of a forlorn countenance, let us recall a celebratory poet. Not Eliot this time, but Gerard Manley Hopkins. He is the poet who immediately supports academic intellectuals called as they are to witness the truth of things in this present moment of the world. Things—*res* in all their gloriously shadowed multiplicity. Hopkins celebrates them through poems whose mediate end is his catching an *inscape* of things in words, he says. That attempt to catch the truth of a thing in words arises out of his response to his own vision of the *instress* of things. And that instress always speaks beyond material manifestation, speaks to the immaterial reality whereby the thing that is, *is* in its first place. For Hopkins knows that "There lives the dearest freshness deep down things," despite our seeing with our sensual natures that these are "dappled things," such things as "rose-moles all in stiple upon trout" or "Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls," or for that matter the flashing recalcitrance of eyes in a confused defense against a shared light from the boy or girl or man or woman in the back row of this morning's class, eyes challenging and so bespeaking an intellect and a soul not yet dead. We wrestle for the beauty possible in things, not only in that "sheer plod" that "makes plough down sillion," but in the sheer plod that makes us try to reveal that when we say a verb is a word expressing action, being, or a state of being, we are dealing with a reality spoken to through our words that the words must respectfully attend. In this instance of the verb, St. Thomas' *being* itself is at issue, or Hopkins' "dearest freshness deep down things." That is why grammar is philosophy. It is also, ultimately, theology. Donald Davidson is right, then, about our circumstances in the teaching of even elementary grammar.

Such is the love of wisdom we must support, whose ultimate end is a love of that Creating and Sustaining Love. That is, if higher education is to be rescued to more viable circumstances for the sake of community. We must care, though not too much. And we must accept without despair that we are always on the edge of being lost in a dark wood, a circumstance requiring of us that humility which saves us from presuming that the whole of the wood in which we are lost is dependent upon us absolutely for its light. Eliot says of this moment of our encounter with things that it finds us always in the middle. For we are

> not only in the middle of the way
> But all the way, in a dark wood, in a bramble,
> On the edge of a grimpen, where is no secure
> foothold. . . .

That is the *abiding* moment which abides because all existing things, ourselves included, are momently held, as Dame Julian of Norwich says of the chestnut she holds on her open palm—a chestnut whose fellows are Hopkins' seen as "fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls"—and because thus momently held by Love, might in a moment cease to be. That small fruit, a thing in the circumstantial world, will nevertheless because of Love be sustained. For as Dame Julian says in her moment of vision, it "lasteth and ever shall for that God loveth it."

Her words alone are sufficient reason why we must exercise the special office of our varied callings in the academy, whether we be called biologist or theologian, chemist or poet. Or even philosopher. Only this reminder, once more: in answering that call, we may not rest our hope in the possibility of effecting a present but permanent restoration of the world, for that is to prepare ourselves for despair.

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Our primary obligation, inherent in the gift of our being—in our life as a discrete person, whatever the gift whereby we may be praised by the world as *specialist* or *expert*—is to accept our discrete intellectual gifts in their limits. The gifts, in reality, are suited only to a portion of the largess of creation, and so they are always only relative, for though easily tempted to presume otherwise, we are not God. What we make of gift in the world, at last, is not the world, but ourselves, through grace. By our ordinate care, leavened by our not caring in the light of eternity, we will be buoyed by a hope sprung of vision, which vision made Dame Julian cry out to us those words that Eliot chooses in ending the lifetime of his poetry:

All manner of thing shall be well.
And all manner of thing shall be well. FT

Apology to Starlings

Starlings may mean more than we supposed,
Their ugliness but a guise
Hiding beauties too deep to probe.
Look how they adorn the barren oak,
Mimicking so many black and restless leaves,
Remnants, making what to them is music
Against a sky whose blue is nearly white,
This winter day as still as God's own love.
And now look!
It wasn't wind that blew them off the branches,
But they race down the dell as if pursued
By thoughts that have no name,
Undulating like waves.
They rise in concert to clear
Our western stand of pine,
Then dip and make a wheeling turn,
Then, against my will,
Vanish behind McPherson's Hill.
I wanted later to say "flock of dreams,"
But thought it best not to strain
In owning that there always was
Something deep to be grateful for.

D. Q. McInerny

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Maritain and the Jews

Michael Novak

Shall we look for the deepest impulse toward that monstrosity—Christians who are anti-Semites? They are seeking an alibi for their innermost sense of guilt, for the death of Christ of which they want to clear themselves: but if Christ did not die for their sins, then they flee from the mercy of Christ! In reality they want not to be redeemed. Here is the most secret and vicious root by virtue of which anti-Semitism dechristianizes Christians, and leads them to paganism.

—Jacques Maritain

Anti-Israelism is no better than anti-Semitism.

—Jacques Maritain

In these days of rampant atheism and relativism among critical elites in Western societies, of genteel nihilism and "liberal irony" à la Richard Rorty, it is not difficult to see that both Judaism and Christianity are being slated for disappearance by a number of our most "advanced" thinkers. Moreover, along with Christianity and Judaism, the Jewish people itself, as well as the State of Israel, are being subjected once again to special pressures and dangers. This is a moment in history, then, when it is particularly appropriate to be reminded of the thought of the extraordinary French Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain (1882-1973).

Maritain understood what we in our time have come to see so vividly: that liberal rationalism and something that must be seen as Judaism/Christianity are in a fateful confrontation. Not long before his death, in a work entitled *On the Church of Christ* (1970), he wrote: "It seems to me very significant that these two events of such great bearing—on the Jewish side the return of a portion of the people to the Promised Land, on the Christian side the Second Council of the Vatican—took place at almost the same time, the first in 1948, the second in 1962-1965. They mark, each in its own way, a reorientation of history." These are, if you think about them, stunning words, a pivoting of all of human history on its axis. "What is more important," he went on, "than the insistence of the Council upon the friendship to be developed and to be consolidated between Jews and Christians?"

Further, he viewed the history of Judaism as a mystery linked to the fate of the entire world. For Judaism in his eyes is linked to the eternal love of God for His chosen people, a love unrepented of and faithful to the end of time. Maritain read all of history in the light of this mystery—including, in his later writings, the existence of the new state of Israel. As he wrote in *Le Mystère d'Israel* (1965) and repeated later in *On the Church of Christ*, it is a strange paradox to see in dispute "the sole territory to which, considering the entire spectacle of human history, it is absolutely, divinely certain that a people has incontestably a right: for the people of Israel is the sole people in the world to whom a land, the land of Canaan, was given by the true God, the unique and transcendent God, creator of the universe and of the human race. And what God has given once is given forever."

While he believed that Israel is not a state by divine right—rather, "only a State like all others"—in the later book he said:

> The return of a portion of the Jewish people and its regroupment in the Holy Land (of which the existence of this State is the sign and the guarantee)—this is the reaccomplish-

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ment, under our eyes, of the divine promise which is without repentance. In short, I remembered [in my first writings on this subject] what was said to Abraham, to Jacob, and to Moses, and what Ezechiel announced: not that I regarded the founding of the State of Israel as a kind of preface to the realization of this prophecy (about this I know absolutely nothing, though it is possible); but in order to keep in my mind respect for the ways of God.

"The mystery of Israel"—this was one of Maritain's favorite themes, to which he returned in at least three essays of varying length.

In 1938, driven by the urgency of Hitler's virulent anti-Semitism, he had written a short book, a manifesto really, entitled *A Christian Looks at the Jewish Question* (1939). He later devoted a number of chapters and essays to such themes as: "The Destiny of the Jewish People" (in *On the Philosophy of History*, 1957); "Judaism" and "The Iniquitous Lot Inflicted on Jews in Christendom" (in *On the Church of Christ*); and "The Christian Meaning of the Story of the Crucifixion" (*Jewish Frontier*, 1944, reprinted in *The Range of Reason*, 1952).* He often expressed his joy that there were many strong and powerful friendships forged in France between Catholics such as Léon Bloy, Charles Péguy, Yves Simon, Paul Claudel, Georges Rouault, and Sigmund Undset with Jewish writers and artists such as Henri Bergson, Paul Landsberg, Manu and Babet Jacob, Benjamin Fondane, and many others.

Maritain held that Jews are "not only a people, but a people endowed with a mystery which pertain[s] to the very order of the redemption of mankind." The Jews form, "analogically, a kind of Mystical Body." In his view, after its lapse in not recognizing Jesus as the Messiah, Judaism no longer had an ecclesial mission as the church of all humankind. But "its mission continues . . . because it cannot help being the chosen people, for the gifts of God are without repentance, and the Jews are still beloved because of their fathers." To the Catholic Church has been assigned the task of the "supernatural and supra-temporal saving of the world." To Israel, on the other hand, is assigned, "in the order of temporal history and its own finalities, the work of the *earthly leavening* of the world." He continues: "Israel is here . . . to irritate the world, to prod it, to move it. It teaches the world to be dissatisfied and restless so long as it has not God, so long as it has not justice on earth. Its indestructible hope stimulates the live forces of history." The continued vitality of Judaism is necessary to the vitality of the world.

Maritain gave the lecture that later became the book *A Christian Looks at the Jewish Question* at the Théatre des Ambassadeurs in Paris on February 5, 1938, and then in English at the Cosmopolitan Club in New York City on December 14, 1938, under the auspices of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. This book was published in Paris and in New York in 1939, just as the firing started in Poland. Soon thereafter, France fell. Maritain was unwilling to live in Vichy France. He was then moved to try to plumb the depths of anti-Semitism, beginning with the obvious:

> "The Jews"—it is very natural for a man, especially some literary man or businessman on whom one or two Jews have played a shabby trick, or who has noticed among the large number of questionable personalities which life has placed upon his path, a few with Semitic profiles among the many unclassifiable—it is so natural for a man to say, not "a Jew," or "three Jews," or "ten Jews" with whom I have had dealings are this or that, but "the Jews" (of whom there are 16 million in the world), "the Jews" are this or that. It is so natural—but it is hardly rational.

Maritain wrote scathingly of the anti-Semitic lies spreading through Europe in 1938, denouncing the Protocols of the Elders of Zion as the "most impudent of forgeries" and examining the exposed and precarious condition of the Jewish population in each of the several countries of Europe.

Israel, Maritain held, intending by this name not the present state of Israel but the Jewish people as a whole, is "a witness to the Scriptures," holding the Bible before the eyes of the world. More than that, this Israel

> is to be found at the very heart of the world's structure, stimulating it, exasperating it, moving it. Like an alien body, like an activating ferment injected into the mass, it gives the world no peace, it bars slumber, it teaches the world to be discontented and restless as long as the world has not God, it stimulates the movement of history.

This is what the world will not forgive. Judaism speaks to the world of a transcendent order, of the absolute, of mystery, of judgment. "If the world hates the Jews . . . it is because the world detests their passion for the absolute and the unbearable stimulus which it inflicts. It is the vocation of Israel which the world execrates." And here, too, there

*It has been suggested that Maritain's concern for the Jews might have been influenced to some extent by the fact that his wife had been born a Jew; but in light of his general theological perspective, that experience would seem to have confirmed rather than altered his views.

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is a parallel: "Thus hatred of Jews and hatred of Christians spring from a common source, from the same recalcitrance of the world, which desires to be wounded neither with the wounds of Adam nor with the wounds of the Savior, neither by the goad of Israel for its movement in time, nor by the cross of Jesus for eternal life."

The drama of Love between the Jewish people and God, he believed, is eternal; it will last in history until the reconciliation of the Synagogue and the Church. So the tension of separate vocations in the world, one of the Synagogue, the other of the Church, will continue indefinitely, as will the tension of the Jewish people with the nations. Maritain approvingly quoted Léon Bloy: "The history of the Jews thwarts the history of the human race as a dike thwarts the flood, to raise its level." The Christian can only respond with reverence for the people God has chosen to love. In September of 1938, he pointed out, Pope Pius XI said, "Notice that Abraham is called our Patriarch, our ancestor. Anti-Semitism is . . . a movement in which we Christians can have no part whatsoever. . . . Anti-Semitism is unacceptable. Spiritually we are Semites."

"*Spiritually we are Semites,*" Maritain happily repeated. How can we not love those whom God so loves, in whose midst we have luckily been chosen to mingle?

> . . . from the Catholic viewpoint, anti-Semitism, if it spreads among those calling themselves disciples of Jesus Christ, seems to be a pathological phenomenon which indicates the deterioration of Christian conscience when it becomes incapable of accepting its own historic responsibilities and of remaining existentially faithful to the high exigencies of Christian truth.
>
> . . . for a Christian to hate or to despise or to wish to treat degradingly the race from which sprung his God and the Immaculate Mother of his God [is self-destructive . . . and] the bitter zeal of anti-Semitism always turns in the end into a bitter zeal against Christianity itself.

The man who more than any other brought Maritain into the Catholic faith was the self-described "pilgrim of the absolute," the mendicant layman and writer Léon Bloy, author of the searing novel *The Woman Who Was Poor.* Maritain quoted a powerful text from Bloy:

> Imagine that people about you were to speak continually of your father and your mother with the greatest contempt, and to have for them only insults or outrageous sarcasm. What would be your sentiments? Well, that is exactly what is happening to Our Lord Jesus Christ. We forget, or rather we do not wish to know, that as a man Our Lord was a Jew, the epitome par excellence of the Jewish nature, the Lion of Judah; that His Mother was a Jewess, the flower of the Jewish race; that the apostles were Jews, along with all the prophets; finally, that our whole liturgy is based on Jewish books. How, then, express the enormity of the outrage and the blasphemy involved in vilifying the Jewish race?

Thus, in Catholic eyes, anti-Semitism is a sin against God's people, and those who commit this sin condemn themselves trebly. In the same measure as they condemn the Jews for infidelity to God, they incur guilt for their own infidelity. To which they add the guilt of mean hypocrisy. They are, further, asking God not "to forgive as we have forgiven," but to damn us as we have damned others. Woe be to anti-Semites! Among Christians there is scarcely a worse sin, except blasphemy. Anti-Semitism runs deeper than mere bias or discrimination or racism or xenophobia. For a Christian, it is a sin against God's own beloved people, a sin against the foundation of his own faith, a kind of suicide.

The debt Catholics owe to Jacques Maritain for his reflections on Judaism is enormous. As teacher to a whole generation of bishops and theologians, his contribution to the statement of Vatican II on the Jews was significant, perhaps philosophically indispensable. Maritain saw that the validity of the Jewish vocation under God is forever; that God's covenant with the Jews is unbreakable; and that the friendship between Christians and Jews is an obligation springing directly from the vocation of both as vessels of God's inscrutable love.

Nonetheless, even some Jewish writers who have written of their own debt to Maritain, such as Rabbi Leon Klenicki, have sadly noted a certain "triumphalism" in some of Maritain's words about Judaism. And it is true that, compared with contemporary American sensibilities, Maritain does sometimes write about Jews in ways that would somewhat embarrass American Christians. For example, in "The Mystery of Israel" (in the version published in *The Social and Political Philosophy of Jacques Maritain),* Maritain wrote, as if with a smile of recognition on his own part:

> If it is true, as Psichari dared to say, that God prefers sin to stupidity, then His liking for the Jews (and for some others) becomes understandable. One is never bored with a Jew. Their nostalgia, their energy, the naiveté of their finesse, their ingenuity, their knowledge of penury are all rare tonics for the mind. I

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> remember with what joy, in a large city of the United States, after lectures and university gatherings, I, who am a *goy*, would go to the home of Jewish friends to refresh myself in the vitality of that tireless pathos and the perpetual motion of ideas which vivified for me long centuries of painful refining of the soul and the intelligence.

In all his writings about the Jews, Maritain made quite clear that he was writing as a Christian. If any Jews were to read his words, he warned, they would find that he writes about them as a Christian and from within a framework established by Christian conceptions. They would not, he thought, expect anything else. At times, this habit of mind and expression would seem, from the American point of view, to violate the American custom of "giving no offense." So resolutely does Maritain write from within a Christian point of view that a too-hasty Jewish reader might imagine him to be implying the inferiority of Judaism to Christianity, and the need of Judaism to be reconciled, eventually, with Christianity. This, of course, is the exact point of tension between Christianity and Judaism. The two share an astonishing number of convictions, aims, expectations, perspectives, and criteria of goodness. It is hard to exaggerate how much they have in common. But on the crucial point of who Jesus is, and what he signifies, there is a radical difference.

Thus, the Jewish interpretation of Christianity is at odds with the Christian interpretation of Judaism. Of this there is no doubt. Still, to assert that each must deny certain claims of the other and let these mutual denials dominate attention, is to go too far. It is wrong to allow the sharp and central point of difference between Christianity and Judaism to obscure all that they hold in common. It is wrong not to walk together as far as possible, on the excuse that at one crucial point there is a clear difference. For neither in Jewish nor in Christian thought is it held that this difference must last for all eternity, or even for the entire duration of temporal history.

Perhaps the best way of clarifying this matter is to point out the asymmetry, abstractly considered, between the way in which Judaism regards Christianity and the way in which Christianity regards Judaism. The asymmetry consists in this: Christianity is not intelligible without Judaism; but Judaism, although it may not be intelligible without the Messiah, is intelligible (from a Jewish point of view) without Christianity. Since there have been false prophets and false Messiahs, it is no contradiction of Jewish thought to conclude that Jesus, however admirable in many ways, was not the Messiah. From a Jewish point of view, Christians are in error. In this sense, Jews can understand Judaism without reference to Christianity. But Christian self-understanding necessarily includes its relation to the whole of Jewish history, not only in the times of the patriarchs and prophets before the coming of Christ, but also afterwards.

Indeed, so true is this latter point that Christians could regard as excessive the prospect that Christianity should replace Judaism wholly, as if it would be good for Christianity for Judaism simply to disappear, subsumed within Christianity. Christianity does not displace Judaism; on the contrary, it needs a vital and living Judaism, in the concrete world of history, in order to help it to understand its own inheritance. For many of the foundations and preconceptions and starting places of Christian life have been, and still are, protected and nourished in a vital Judaism. This witness of Judaism is concretely indispensable to keeping the Jewish tradition alive also within Christianity itself.

To be a Christian is not only to be "spiritually a Semite," but in some very subtle sense to be a Jew. A great many of the prerogatives of the Christian faith belong first of all to the Jews. Many of the elements basic to a Christian way of life were first basic to a Jewish way of life: a reverence for the Scriptures; a sense of the sacred; respect for the law; humility before the transcendent; the cherishing of the human capacity for reflection and choice; the sharp taste of the existing (as distinct from nonexisting), and of being (as opposed to nonbeing), and therefore of the blessed contingency of this created world; the practice of compassion; the ideal of friendship with God and of "walking with God"; the habit of prayer; and a sense of the presence of God during the activities of every day—all these are habits of life that Christians share with Jews and have learned from Judaism. Before he was an exemplar for the imitation of Christians, Jesus was an exemplar of those who follow the law, the prophets, and the mandates of Jewish daily life.

Thus, in order to interpret many of the basic concepts of the Christian testament, Christians need a living witness of the practice of these concepts in a living community of Jews. In this sense, the Jewish community of our time plays for Christianity an indispensable role. Even in an ideal Maritainian world, in which Judaism and Christianity will have become one, it would be necessary for those who live closer to the Christian spectrum of this community to be grounded in, held in balance by, and inspired by those who live closer to the Jewish spectrum of this one community.

But that is to speak of the ideal. In the real world of tangled history, tension, misunderstanding, and even conflict, the Christian, simply to be a good Christian, must necessarily be conscious of how much he owes to Judaism. By contrast, it is at least psychologically possible for a Jew, while respecting

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Christianity, not only to reject it as a "fulfillment" of Judaism, but also to conceive of Judaism in terms that seem to him, at least, not to depend on the history of Christianity.

This point requires clarification. For such independence may not be, in actual history, as thorough as it seems in abstract statement. Historical research seems to show that there are significant discontinuities between the Judaism of the pre-Christian era and the Judaism of today. More to the point, in the period between the dispersion of the Jews from Judea and today, the historical Jewish community developed some of its own conceptions, practices, and self-understandings in the face of questions posed by the growing power and prestige of Christianity. It would have been surprising, indeed, if the rabbis of the first millennium after Christ did not face questions for Judaism arising from the surrounding phenomena of Christianity. It would have been surprising if the forms of Christian theology that developed between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries A.D. did not influence the questions and methods of Jewish scholars, as those of the latter certainly influenced Christian scholars. When one speaks of the concrete world of history as it is, rather than of Judaism and Christianity as abstractions, the picture necessarily grows in complexity, and its colorations in subtlety.

Nonetheless, a Christian trying to place himself in the shoes of his Jewish friends, at least as our experience in America allows us to do so, can dimly begin to imagine why, to a Jew, Christianity does not *seem* like a religion of the true Messiah awaited by Judaism for so many ages. In the medieval period, the first attempt by Christians to imagine a Christian culture, as Maritain pointed out, was to imagine it as a *sacral* culture, one in which the intermixing of sacred and profane, eternal and temporal, Church and state, was carried out in a direct and naive way, a way that posed grave dangers to both sides of each coupling. Such an attempt must have seemed like no more than common sense. It still appeals to a certain, albeit diminishing, number of Christians. In such a civilization, the self-understanding of Christianity was given public (and now embarrassing) dramatization. Thus, on the vigil of Easter, the president of the Jewish community at Toulouse would be brought before the Count of Toulouse to receive a ritual slap.

In public and visible ways, Jews were subjected to second-class status and limited in what they could do. They were often humiliated. Far worse still, a lethal and deadly anti-Semitism was allowed to fester and at times to break forth in displays of passionate and horrible violence. From all this history, which Maritain portrayed in vivid detail, despite his restraint and softened manner of exposition, how does one find evidence of the hand of the true Messiah? The terrible betrayals by which Christianity is unfaithful to itself are doubly sinful, both in themselves and because of the darkness of mind and antipathy to which they give rise regarding the true calling of Christianity.

In this regard, Maritain used a particularly compelling example. Those who accuse the Jews of being "Christ-killers," he said, seem to be desirous above all of hiding from themselves the fact that it was their own sins that killed Christ: that Christ died particularly for their sins, and thus in a highly personal way became their Redeemer. In trying falsely to divert attention to the Jews, they undercut their own redemption. In their attempt to hide from their own sinfulness, they double their guilt. Thus, it is quite wrong to say that anti-Semitism is a natural fruit of Christianity. On the contrary, in all its forms and in each of its devious paths, anti-Semitism is a radical denial of Christianity. Its real motive is a kind of, in Maritain's word, "christophobia." Anti-Semitism is a refusal to face one's own sins and to accept one's own redemption. It is also a radical affront both to the God of Christianity and to the God of Judaism—Who is one and the same God.

At one point, Maritain, following St. Paul, added up the ten prerogatives of Judaism. They constitute a list before which the human soul can only lower its head in awe. For the Christian, the existence of Judaism casts light on the core identity of the human race. The Jews lie closer to the heart of the nature and destiny of human beings than any other people. They are a chosen people.

These are among their prerogatives: First to receive the deposit of the Scriptures, Israel received directly the Word of God. It is the first biblical people. To the Jews is given as well the name of Israel, God's well beloved, and they are the first and unforgettable people of God. To them was made manifest the glory, the *shekhinah*, that "supernatural brilliance in which the Ark and the Temple were at times enveloped." To them belong the repeated Covenants entered into between God and His people. To them belongs the Torah, "established by the angels and published by Moses in the midst of the lightnings of Sinai." To them came also the revealed form of the proper worship of the One God; and the Messianic promises; and the Patriarchs. And finally, among them was born the Christ, "of the lineage of Abraham and of the blood of David" and "at the same time Sovereign Lord of the ages."

Maritain said that he had never fully grasped the centrality of the Jews to human history until he reread, and meditated closely on, St. Paul. "St. Paul has been especially commissioned to convey to us the enlightenment of divine inspiration, the views

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of our God on that subject," the place of the Jewish people in history. "It is a shame that so many Christians do not know the statements of the Apostle to the Gentiles. Never did I realize so acutely the essentially anti-Christian madness of anti-Semitism as when preparing a book on St. Paul and gathering together his texts on the mystery of Israel."

In the generation of Catholics for whom Maritain was writing, a sharp distinction was made between a "problem" and a "mystery." The term *problem* came out of the discourse of science and a this-worldly pragmatism. It suggests that something is awry, out of kilter, not yet rationally disposed, for which it is imperative to find a "solution." With considerable energy, Maritain opposed this way of thinking in many spheres, but especially about the Jewish people. "To wish to find, in the pure, simple, decisive sense of the word, a *solution* of the problem of Israel, is to attempt to stop the movement of history." On the contrary, to review the history of the Jewish people is to be prompted to wonder. The concept *mystery* is intended to capture this. Of problems the human mind is master; but in the presence of mystery, no matter how far it pushes the boundaries of its knowledge, the mind encounters its own inadequacy.

> Israel is a mystery. Of the same order as the mystery of the world or the mystery of the Church. Like them, it lies at the heart of redemption. A philosophy of history, aware of theology, can attempt to reach some knowledge of this mystery, but the mystery will surpass that knowledge in all directions. Our ideas and our consciousness can be immersed in such things; they cannot circumscribe them.

The world, then, needs more faithful Jews and more faithful Christians, not fewer of either. And the faithful ones not only know that they need each other; in one another they often recognize, without knowing how or why, the presence of the same God they both love, and by whom they know themselves to be loved, forevermore. FI

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ETHICS AND PUBLIC POLICY CENTER

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Review Essay

The Haunted Mr. Hawthorne

M. D. Aeschliman

SALEM IS MY DWELLING PLACE: A LIFE OF NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE. By EDWARD HAVILAND MILLER. *University of Iowa Press. 596 pp. $35.*

"Jefferson's public career focused on securing for Americans," the historian Edmund S. Morgan has written, "a right of expatriation from the past." This was a large part of what Morgan calls "the meaning of independence" for Jefferson, and probably always has been for many Americans. The more populist and charismatic democrat Andrew Jackson, coming a generation later, has been characterized by Richard Hofstadter by the phrase "self-assertive subjectivism." Jefferson and Jackson both defeated and replaced Adamses of a more conservative and traditional character and cast of mind. They did so partly by offering more radical definitions of the independence of self and national identity, a development whose literary-philosophical correlative and sequel could be found in the life and work of Emerson, his "Transcendental" brethren, and their Romantic and existentialist disciples, from Walt Whitman to Henry Miller and Norman Mailer. "Emersonian self-reliance identifies dissent as the quintessentially American gesture," writes Sacvan Bercovitch, "and then universalizes it as the radical imperative to subjectivity." This is a "declaration of independence" that the urbane, cosmopolitan, aristocratic eighteenth-century liberal Thomas Jefferson probably never conceived of, much less intended, but it is a working out of the "right of expatriation from the past."

No spirit or sensibility could be more antithetical to this program than that of Nathaniel Hawthorne, the subject of Edwin H. Miller's substantial new biography, *Salem Is My Dwelling Place*. Hawthorne was obsessed with the human past, collective and familial, haunted by its virtues and its vices, its glories and degradations. His was an intensely meditative, introspective, introverted, even retrospective character and imagination, but it was also social and moral in a way radically distinct from the temper both of his liberal age and of his liberated contemporaries Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Alcott, Ripley, Margaret Fuller, and Theodore Parker. For Hawthorne the imagination, the spirit, and the self were not "transcendental" romantic and cosmic possibilities, but were inevitably, even fatally, engaged and conditioned in a "local habitation and a name." The local habitation for much of his life was Salem, Massachusetts, with important chapters elsewhere: as a boy along the idyllic shores of Lake Sebago, Maine; as a student at Maine's Bowdoin College; as a young idealist at the Brook Farm utopian community west of Boston (1841); as a married man in Emerson's Concord (1842-45); as a summer neighbor of Herman Melville in the Berkshires of western Massachusetts (1850); as a mature writer and consular official in Liverpool, England (1853-58); and as a traveller and resident in Italy (1858-59)—before a final period of ill health and death in Concord (1859-1864).

Yet Hawthorne's centripetal imagination always came back to Salem. It was his legacy, his setting, his theme, his "concrete universal"—the particular place and history through which whatever universals or generalizations or truths he could earn or discern would be made known. It was a legacy of both honor and shame. The first settlers of Salem, Hawthorne wrote in "Main-Street," were "stalwart" men, who strode "sturdily onward," brave and pious men of "thoughtful strength," men "who do not merely find, but make their place in the system of human affairs." But they were also, often, authoritarian and self-righteous sinners, displacing Indians, trying and executing "witches," persecuting and whipping dissenters from their own dissent, such as Baptists and Quakers.

Hawthorne could never forget that his own ancestors had been pious, sincere, hard-working, determined—and sometimes evil and cruel. In 1692, Major John Hawthorne had been "the infamous judge at the Salem witch trials," in Miller's words. But although Nathaniel Hawthorne lived in a later, liberal age that was declaring its independence from, superiority to, the past and progressive confidence in its glowing future, he was apparently unable to persuade himself that human nature collectively improves over historical time. In an expansive, optimistic, self-congratulatory age, he was an ironic dissenter who saw sin, evil, and tragedy as perennial human phenomena, to be reduced, mitigated, or overcome—if at all—by individual moral and religious effort, and by what Burke called the moral imagination. As Randall Stewart pointed out nearly

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half a century ago, Hawthorne's lifelong literary models and companions were the great Puritan moralist-seers Spenser, Milton, and Bunyan, and of the eighteenth-century writers, the great Augustan Christian humanists, especially Dr. Johnson, whose boyhood home in Lichfield Hawthorne visited on what must be called a pilgrimage of veneration. "On July 4, 1855, his fifty-first birthday," Miller writes, "Hawthorne journeyed alone to Lichfield and Uttoxeter to pay homage to Dr. Samuel Johnson."

Unlike his great friend Burke, Johnson was a notorious critic of the idealistic claims to virtue and progress of the American Revolution and Declaration of Independence, a critical stance that of course earned him hostility in the new republic. This hostility—from which Burke was evidently not immune either—is evident in John Adams' letters to Jefferson of December 25, 1813 and June 20, 1815, in which he accuses Johnson and Burke of being "more . . . Catholicks than Protestants at Heart," a very perceptive observation indeed. Yet it was the more optimistic and secular Jefferson—and most of his generation of Virginia gentlemen—who had more to fear from Johnson's mind and pen than did the patriotic, pious New England Federalist Adams. No one has ever written a more brilliant, succinct criticism of the essential hypocrisy in the lives and minds of the Virginia Founders than Johnson did in 1775: "How is it that we hear the loudest *yelps* for liberty among the drivers of negroes?"

If the Puritans lashed Quakers and hung "witches," the Southern gentlemen exploited, lashed, and hung recalcitrant negroes—as in a more subtle way the burgeoning commercial-industrial upper classes of the North exploited and abused the newly emergent industrial working classes of immigrants and poor whites, especially in the growing cities of the Northeast. The ugliness and hypocrisy of the new northeastern capitalism was brilliantly pointed out in Hawthorne's own time by the Southern writer George Fitzhugh, as C. Vann Woodward has shown in his essay "A Southern War Against Capitalism" (1960).

Thus when Emerson, whom Randall Stewart calls "the age's chief optimist," asserted on his fifty-eighth birthday that he "could never give much reality to evil and pain," Hawthorne would have been as incredulous and outraged at the sentiment as Emerson's friend Carlyle was. May 1861 was not a propitious time to assert the unreality or unimportance of "evil and pain": one month before, Gen. Beauregard had ordered the bombardment of Fort Sumter which began the nineteenth century's bloodiest war. Only in the ivory tower of a comfortable Concord study could the sins and pains of the race be so airily and confidently dismissed.

For a time Hawthorne, too, had a "comfortable Concord study," but he was a man who throughout his life knew and lived with the anxieties of financial insecurity. The newly confident commercial-industrial capitalist class solved some problems and created others; someone is always drowning, Hawthorne somewhere wrote, in our fluctuating commercial American sea—an insight as powerful today as it was 150 years ago. As scholars such as Randall Stewart and Mark Van Doren pointed out nearly a half-century ago, Hawthorne disbelieved in the secular, progressive optimism of the nineteenth century because, in his own words, the progressive spirit "preposterously miscalculated the possibilities" of human life. As the historian James Truslow Adams later wrote, Emerson (and his followers) articulated "that vast American optimism with its refusal to recognize and wrestle with the problem of evil." Abraham Lincoln, Robert E. Lee, and Frederick Douglass had no such luxury.

Writing in the aftermath of World War II, Mark Van Doren characterized Hawthorne's reaction to the programmatic liberal optimism of his age: Hawthorne "merely knew that it was wrong when it said with Emerson that self-reliance is a sufficient virtue comprehending all other virtues. 'The world has done its best' [Hawthorne wrote] 'to secure repose without relinquishing evil.' The man who could write this could see how little repose was in store for the complacent." The myth of collective progress as uniquely and, in an idolatrous way, "providentially" pioneered by America, through "manifest destiny" and laissez-faire capitalism ("Self-Reliance" writ large) and populist democratism, would arouse moral hopes that it would then always defeat or disappoint, as in the later case of the terminal bitterness and misanthropy of that quintessential American optimist-turned-pessimist, Mark Twain.

By contrast, Hawthorne found in marriage, family, work, and meditation on history and religion a surer guide to relative wisdom and happiness. He knew about the "heart of darkness," and refused either to ignore or to be overwhelmed by it. In what is still probably the finest individual insight into his writing, Herman Melville asserted in his great review "Hawthorne and His Mosses" (1850) that "This great power of blackness in him derives its force from its appeals to that Calvinistic sense of innate depravity and original sin, from whose visitations . . . no deeply thinking mind is always and wholly free." In her fine book *Hawthorne: Calvin's Ironic Stepchild*, the distinguished Hawthorne scholar Agnes M. Donohue has persuasively argued for the presence in his writing of a "Calvinist-ordained irony," and has also tried to solve the "mystery" of the illness and artistic decline of Hawthorne's last decade. She argues that the years

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of residence in England (1853-58) and especially in Italy (1858-59) had a profoundly destabilizing effect on his previous, at least partly Calvinist, vision of reality. Hawthorne's confrontation with continental, especially Italian, Catholicism undermined his highly personal and Protestant sense of himself, the individual, and society. Hawthorne's Protestant sensibility is often ambivalent. There is something Catholic, and premodern, in Hester's public penance in *The Scarlet Letter*: "Had there been a Papist among the crowd of Puritans," Hawthorne writes of Hester on the scaffold, "he might have seen in this beautiful woman . . . an object to remind him of the image of Divine maternity, which so many illustrious painters have vied with one another to represent; something which should remind him, indeed, but only by contrast, of that sacred image of sinless motherhood, whose infant was to redeem the world." "Divine maternity," after all, is not a Protestant idea.

Nineteenth-century Protestantism tended to bifurcate into liberal, social-Gospel progressivism, such as Unitarianism, and the emotional, "backwater," Calvinistic Evangelicalism of the South and the rural countryside, with its implacably distant and masculine God as Judge. Hawthorne mocked the old Calvinism that still held the field at Bowdoin in his student days but which was being driven steadily from the major academic centers of New England, and which was moving west and south, especially south; but this Calvinism left a mark on him. In addition, the older Puritanism exercised a powerful effect on his imagination by its clarity, its drama, its understanding of evil, and its contrast to the bland optimism and secularizing, genteel Protestantism and liberalism of eastern New England in his time. As Van Doren put it, "To him the Puritan world was warmer than his own." This older Puritan world was premodern and frankly supernatural, like its parent Catholicism. In Hawthorne we find in effect a comprehensive interpretation of early New England history in which the founding generation is criticized but also admired—it was "stern, severe, intolerant, but not superstitious, not even fanatical," and possessed "a far-seeing worldly sagacity." It had "a gloomy energy of character" ("Main-Street"). John Bunyan's Pilgrim obsessed Hawthorne throughout his life.

Agnes M. Donohue contends that Hawthorne's exposure to earthy Italian Catholicism subtly undermined his previous conservative Protestant loyalties and led to a profound crisis in the spirit of this intensely shy, meditative, and austere man. The sickness, premature aging, and depression of his last, American years have found many interpretations. The physician Oliver Wendell Holmes, who saw but never closely examined Hawthorne, suggested that he suffered from "some internal organic—perhaps malignant—disease." Emerson, his acquaintance but no close friend, noted, rather ungenerously, "the painful solitude of the man—which, I suppose, could no longer be endured, and he died of it." Agnes Donohue's argument, though not mentioned in Miller's biography, is forceful and provocative. Like many another American, Hawthorne found himself attracted, fascinated, and unsettled by Europe and Catholicism.

Again, unlike Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman—and even Melville—Hawthorne evinces a profoundly heterosexual and monogamous nature, one to which the elemental fact of womanliness is ever present and open to his powers of depiction. Like Anna Karenina, Hester is one of the great heroines in world literature, and if Hawthorne was unsympathetic in his estimate of Margaret Fuller (whom he knew) and her brand of feminism, he sympathetically portrayed Anne Hutchinson as a courageous martyr, and he adored and praised his own wife. One of the finest features of E. H. Miller's biography is its conclusion, in which he discusses the life of Hawthorne's daughter Rose, who entered a Catholic order in 1895 and, in Hawthorne, New York, as Mother Alphonsa, tended cancer patients for the last thirty years of her life until her death in 1926. She claimed that her father had been her guide. "Perhaps she fulfilled Hester Prynne's dream," Miller writes, and then quotes it from *The Scarlet Letter*: "The angel and apostle of the coming revelation must be a woman, indeed, but lofty, pure, and beautiful; and wise, moreover, not through dusky grief, but the ethereal medium of joy; and showing how sacred love should make us happy, by the truest test of a life successful to such an end!"

Another woman, Flannery O'Connor, one of Hawthorne's chief imaginative disciples as a moral fabulist, blamed Emerson for the "vaporization of religion in America." Of Emerson, Whitman, and the other oracular, "orphic," transcendental gnostics, Hawthorne was always suspicious. "He tested their truths in the truth of narrative," Mark Van Doren wrote, and he "found them wanting." From Emerson to Harold Bloom and "New Age" spirituality, the Gnostic afflatus has had a long and profitable run in American culture. E. H. Miller's biography joins a group of distinguished works—by Randall Stewart, Mark Van Doren, Marion Montgomery, and Quentin Anderson—in bringing to full literary life the American master who serves as an effective and definitive antidote to the fantasies of the imperial self. FT

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Books In Review

The New Liberal Racism

TWO NATIONS: BLACK AND WHITE, SEPARATE, HOSTILE, UNEQUAL. BY ANDREW HACKER. *Scribner's. 272 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by **Glenn C. Loury**

THE SHOCKINGLY VIOLENT reaction to the Rodney King verdict, destined to be remembered as the great Los Angeles Riot of 1992, has provoked more intense discussion among the American public about the nation's perennial problems of race relations and urban affairs than at any time since the "long hot summers" of the 1960s. Sadly, the heat of this scrutiny has not often yielded the light of insight or wisdom. Instead, we have been repeatedly subjected to the hysterical ravings of political and academic demagogues, who seek to build their careers by exploiting the alienation of the urban black masses and the gullibility of liberal white elites. This demagoguery has taken many forms, but it is perhaps most dangerous when disguised as "analysis," and offered up by a respected social scientist. Andrew Hacker's book *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal* provides an instructive illustration of the mischief now afoot in the land.

This volume was not written in reaction to the Los Angeles riot—it was published last spring, shortly before the event took place. But in the aftermath of the disturbance the book was catapulted onto the best-seller lists, and was widely cited as a prescient foretelling of the coming "rebellion." As the title suggests, and as the author repeatedly emphasized during numerous interviews—some given while the looting and arson were going on—it is Andrew Hacker's view that the events in Los Angeles were entirely predictable, indeed inevitable. From his perspective, what we observed in L.A. was the well-deserved consequence of the systematic neglect by "white America" of the basic human needs of blacks. According to Hacker, the racial gulf now stands wider than ever in American life, despite a growing black middle class, increasing numbers of black elected officials, and the continuing political clout of the civil rights lobby. And why? Because of the persistent racism of "white America," a racism that has evolved from its historical "no blacks need apply" character into a more subtle, covert, institutionalized form: "Racial tensions serve too many important purposes to be easily ameliorated," he says. Moreover, while "there are things that should be done . . . there is scant evidence that the majority of white Americans are ready to invest in redistributive programs, let alone give themselves in more exacting ways."

HACKER TAKES as his mission to lay bare the true nature of covert white racism in contemporary American life. The irony is that he succeeds in powerfully revealing the face of a new strand of American racism, but not the one he thinks he sees. This book can be most profitably read not for what it discloses about the racism of the avowed enemies of black aspirations, but rather for its inadvertent revelation of the deep racism of some liberal whites who, like Hacker, think themselves to be friends of the black cause. He manages in the course of this book to convey a profound contempt for blacks and whites alike, offering sweeping generalizations about the behaviors and attitudes of groups of people based on nothing more than racial identities.

He writes here in a matter-of-fact prose style that affects the attitude of a disinterested observer, and gives the impression that he is oblivious to the possibility that he has given offense. But Hacker intends to offend whites, the better to shock them from their racial complacency, and he wants desperately to placate blacks, the better to show that he "understands" their plight. Thus in an opening chapter called "Dividing American Society," we learn that the root cause of our racial woes is a fundamental asymmetry of power between blacks and whites, not as individual persons, but as racial collectives. This asymmetry is discernible to Hacker in the very definition of racial categories, for whites have determined to consign all persons with any visible Negro ancestry to the degraded status of being black, while welcoming European immigrants, however swarthy, into the privileged club associated with whiteness. For Hacker, to be black in America is to be degraded from birth, while to be white is to know that you are inherently superior to anyone with darker skin than your own.

Hacker combines simplistic anthropomorphic thinking with a flair for the conspiracy theory, writing as if a single actor that he calls "white America" sat down to decide upon the linguistic rules of the racial identity game, with the explicit objective of creating a racial bipolarity:

> Hence "mestizo" and "mulatto" have disappeared from our parlance, as have "creole" and "quadroon." Nor has this country retained the generic term "colored" for people whose ancestries are obviously mixed. . . . It has been far from accidental that this country has chosen to reject the idea of a graduated spectrum, and has instead fashioned a rigid bifurcation. . . . Had white America really believed in its egalitarian declarations, it would have welcomed former slaves into its midst at the close of the Civil

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War. Indeed, had that happened, America would not be two racial nations today.

Of course, "this country" has abandoned the term "colored" because, in the first instance, Negroes regarded the term as undignified. And whatever Hacker may intend by suggesting that "white America" ought to have "welcomed former slaves into its midst," the failure to engage in wholesale intermarriage across racial lines is hardly a test of the extent to which egalitarian political ideals are genuinely held. This passage displays breathtaking ignorance of American political history. For example, while Abraham Lincoln was decidedly not in favor of wholesale social intercourse between blacks and whites, his differences with Judge Stephen Douglas and Chief Justice Roger Taney over the meaning of the founders' "egalitarian declaration" could hardly have been greater. For Hacker such differences amount to nothing at all in the face of "white America's" implacable racial prejudice.

But it is pointless to argue with the belief system evident in this book for, as Hacker states explicitly, these are not matters subject to resolution through the dispassionate review of historical fact. This becomes painfully obvious when we consider Hacker's account of how blacks think and feel about their position and possibilities in American society. It is here that his own racism becomes most evident. Though he would never say it directly, Hacker writes as if, when he looks upon today's black Americans, he sees a confused, defeated, and disturbed collection of people, obsessed with what whites have done to them, and incapable of doing anything for themselves. He seems to think of blacks as though they are children whose failures can best be explained by reference to the inadequate tutelage of their betters.

HACKER'S IS THE clearest, most candid statement that I have yet seen of the new liberal racism—the patronizing attitude that conveys contempt by means of evasion and apology, explaining every black failure or foible as the result of something white people have or have not done. Hacker would, of course, vehemently deny this, but if you have ever sought to understand why "black men and women [find it hard] to assimilate into the American mainstream," here is Hacker's answer:

> [T]he "Africa" in African-American contrasts with much of the European structure of technology and science, of administrative systems based on linear modes of reasoning. . . . [For if] the European heritage imposes the regimen of standardized tests, the African dream inspires discursive story telling celebrating the soul and the spirit.

And if you were puzzled by the persistent deficit of blacks relative to whites in performance on standardized tests, here is Hacker's explanation:

> [The reason] why even better-off blacks tend to do less well than whites on tests used by schools and employers . . . [is that] [s]ince blacks of all classes are more likely to be raised in segregated surroundings, they grow up with less exposure to the kinds of reasoning that standardized examinations expect. . . . One outcome of this isolation is that black Americans have less sustained exposure to the "modern" world than have many members of immigrant groups.

If you were wondering how to "account for the low percentage of blacks" in certain occupations, you now have the following "Hackerism" at your disposal:

> Perhaps most revealing of all is the small number of dental hygienists (2.5% of the total in 1990.) While white patients seem willing to be cared for by black nurses (31% of nursing aides and orderlies were black in 1990), they apparently draw the line at having black fingers in their mouths.

In Andrew Hacker's America, blacks are responsible for little that affects their lives and can achieve nothing unless whites reform themselves. The African sensibility, unlike the Asian, he seems to say, is incompatible with the intellectual rigors of "the modern world," though possessed of a superior spirituality. Unless whites choose to integrate with blacks, thereby sharing some of their natural affinity to the things of modernity, we ought not be surprised that blacks achieve little. The small number of black optometrists, actuaries, or physicists has nothing whatever to do with the choices and efforts of blacks themselves. Blacks are not even capable of racism on their own; acts of hatred on the part of blacks do not have the same moral significance as those same acts undertaken by whites, for "racism should be attributed only to those who have the power to cause suffering," and blacks, being "an oppressed people," presumably lack such power. (This will come as news to Reginald Denny, or the Central Park jogger.)

Hacker's stubborn refusal to take blacks seriously, as morally responsible agents capable of shaping their lives according to their will, leads him to perverse and dangerous conclusions. When he writes of family structure and relations between parents and children, he reports that 56.2 percent of black and 17.3 percent of white households were headed by women in 1990, which leads him to ask: "Do the races really differ?" The answer would seem to be obvious. But Hacker, stressing that the ratio of the percentage of black households headed by women to the percentage of white households so headed has not changed over the last forty

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years, concludes that racial differences are not really important, and that the apparent disparity is in fact the consequence of "concurrent adaptations to common cultural trends" on the part of blacks and whites alike.

Why would anyone claiming the status of social scientist focus on the issue in this particular way? True enough, the proportion of single-parent households has more than tripled among both races since 1950, but this means something quite different for whites, where the change has been from one of every twenty households to one in six, than it does for blacks, where the change has been from one of every six households to better than one in two.

Were it the case that the majority of American children, and not just black American children, had come to be raised without a father present, I doubt that even Andrew Hacker could ignore the tragic implications for our country. But when that collapse of the family is already well advanced among blacks he manages to overlook the tragedy, seeing only the working-out of "common cultural trends" that have no racial significance. In other words, the meaning to Hacker of this deeply disturbing trend is to be found not in what it tells us about how black men, women, and children are living together, but rather in what it shows us about the shortcomings of white society. Blacks will improve their family lives when and if whites manage to improve theirs, Hacker argues. Blacks are not agents who can shape their cultural and behavioral patterns, but merely the bellwethers of developments among whites.

In his discussion of racial differences in crime and victimization Hacker continues his unwitting (?) assault on the dignity and moral integrity of black people. Noting that black men commit the crime of rape at three to four times the rate of white men, and that one-quarter of their victims are white women, Hacker sees in this disparity the stuff of political protest:

> Certainly, the conditions black men face in the United States generate far more anger and rage than is ever experienced by white men. . . . If black men vent their frustrations on women, it is partly because the women are more available as targets, compared with the real centers of power, which remain so inchoate and remote.

And a black rapist choosing a white victim is especially significant, for he

> compounds defiance with the thrill of danger. . . . Each such act brings further demoralization of the dominant race, exposing the inability to protect its own women from the worst kind of degradation.

Robbery, in Hacker's view, is a crime particularly rich with opportunities for free-lance racial justice, as white victims surely know:

> For white victims caught in interracial robberies the loss of cash or valuables is seldom their chief concern. Rather, the racial character of the encounter defines the experience. In the social scheme of things, the tables have been turned. For the present, a black man has the upper hand. Hence the added dread that your assailant will not be satisfied simply with your money, but may take another moment to inflict retribution for the injustices done to his race.

Hacker is all too ready to "understand" why some young black men terrorize the cities and towns in which they live, but he reserves his considerable capacity for outrage for a condemnation of Bernhard Goetz's "vigilantism," and of police officers who, Hacker contends, without offering a shred of evidence, give "scant attention" to black crime victims. "Underlying this official unconcern," he says, is the belief that "less is lost when a black person dies, whether they are slain by the police or a criminal." Just who believes this, and how Hacker knows that they do, he does not bother to say.

Nor is this by any means all. Commenting on the use of quotas to promote black police officers to the rank of sergeant in New York City, Hacker criticizes as racially biased the exam (passed by more than 10 percent of the white officers taking it but less than 2 percent of the blacks) because it requires test-takers to know the meanings of words like "relevant," "disposition," "unsubstantiated," and "tactfully." "Not surprisingly," he proceeds to tell us, "white people seem to do most of the worrying about this apparent harm [of racial preferences] to black self-esteem." Just how would Hacker know that to be the case? "The experience of being black in America cannot help but stir suspicions that in most cases you were never given a fair chance," he asserts blithely, with not a shred of evidence to support the assertion.

HACKER SMUGLY dismisses white complaints about affirmative action in admissions at the University of California at Berkeley, which has, over a period of seven years, reduced white representation in the entering class from two-thirds to two-fifths: "It was not easy for white Californians to complain, since their overall scholastic records were not very auspicious." He means that 16 percent of whites, compared to 33 percent of Asians, had high school records making them eligible for admission at Berkeley in 1988. That only 5 percent of black and Hispanic high school students were eligible does not occasion any comparable qualification by Hacker of the legitimacy of their claims. Indeed, I have calculated from his numbers that for the entering class at Berkeley in 1988 an eligible black student was ten times more likely to be admitted than an eligible white, and an

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eligible Asian student was four times more likely to be admitted than an eligible white. You might think this would lead Hacker to reflect upon the legitimacy of discriminating against white students at Berkeley, but you would, of course, be wrong.

The same data imply that for the entering class of 1983 a black student had about half the chance of a white or Asian to have graduated five years after admission. Furthermore, the vast disparity in qualification upon admission among students of various races proved to be easily observable in the classroom afterward. Hacker reports, without comment, that at Berkeley, "It is almost as if two dissimilar colleges were sharing the same campus. Indeed, [a] . . . study of freshman calculus courses found that whereas only 5 percent of the Asian students failed, half of the black students did." Might such occurrences have anything to do with racial tensions on campuses around the country? Hacker does not say. Does this information suggest that affirmative action is a poorly conceived policy at U.C. Berkeley? Hacker does not seem to think so. Instead, he gloats that at Smith College, which has only 3.2 percent black enrollment, "the paucity of black faces [is] . . . a cause for shame" among many students and professors. He discards the suggestion (made by the late Justice William O. Douglas, among others) that affirmative action in college admissions be based on class, not race. Why? Because "low-income whites and Asians would end up with all the 'race blind' awards." Paradoxically, the awards cannot be genuinely "race blind" for Hacker unless they result in the requisite number of "black faces" on campus. The question of how many pass calculus or graduate we can worry about later.

THIS BOOK clearly illustrates one little-examined reason why our nation is so deeply divided along racial lines. Hacker's singular failure to be able constructively to criticize politically correct thought on racial issues is far from limited to him, and is undoubtedly a failure participated in by many of the avid readers who made this work a best seller. The problem is that, in an effort to avoid the accusation of being a racist, with the good intention of "understanding" the rage, incivility, and incapacity of their black neighbors, students, and friends, these people abandon their responsibility to treat blacks with the seriousness that they reserve for whites.

For Hacker, and for much of liberal white opinion in our time, a history of victimization has made black people disappear insofar as being accountable moral agents capable of shaping their own destinies is concerned. The patronizing tone of his discussion of blacks is unrelenting. His whites are powerful, his blacks pitiable. Whites warrant being condemned because they can choose to do better, to stop being racists, to become more generous and compassionate. Blacks do not warrant critical exhortation because they are without choices, their misery and mediocrity are inevitable, their racial hatreds derivative from the primary moral failings of whites. Never does Hacker allow that, despite the bad hand blacks have been dealt, they need not react with violence; instead he rushes to note that whites have been violent too. Never does he suggest that even black policemen who grew up in segregated neighborhoods might be capable of and expected to learn the meaning of words like "tactfully"; instead he endorses quotas for those who cannot, and castigates whites who might dare to be offended by the policy. Never does he worry that black parents could be letting their children down by not marrying.

In his headlong rush to condemn "white America," Hacker so reduces black Americans that, by the end of his book, even the murderous drug gangs who kill innocents with automatic weapons during drive-by shootings are not seen as responsible for their acts. For Hacker, they are, paraphrasing Ralph Ellison, morally invisible men. Concerning these murders of young black men and innocent bystanders by other young black men, he writes:

> These would certainly seem to be acts for which the perpetrators should be held strictly responsible. . . .Yet it may also be asked *why* so many young men are engaging in what amounts to a self-inflicted genocide. While in one sense these are "free" acts, performed of personal volition, when they become so widespread, they must also be seen as expressing a despair that suffuses much of their race. . . . No other race is wounding itself so fatally. Nor can it be said that black Americans chose this path for themselves.
>
> So in allocating responsibility, the response should be clear. It is white America that has made being black so disconsolate an estate. Legal slavery may be in the past, but segregation and subordination have been allowed to persist. Even today, America imposes a stigma on every black child at birth.

This, then, is the brave new vision of the liberal racist. I am outraged at the specter of a white academic apologist invoking a putative generalized despair of my race as excuse for the venal acts of a handful of murderers—and this to the broad acclaim of the liberal political elites of my country. What of the millions of young men similarly situated who do *not* maim and kill? Are their choices to be ignored in the haste of blaming "white America" for the crimes of a few thousands? Cannot Mr. Hacker and his ilk see the damage their rationalizations are doing to the dignity of my people?

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The Banality of Sin

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS: JEWISH, CHRISTIAN, AND CLASSICAL REFLECTIONS ON HUMAN NATURE. By SOLOMON SCHIMMEL. *Free Press. 298 pp. $22.95.*

Reviewed by **Jacob Neusner**

PROFESSOR OF Jewish Education and Psychology at the Hebrew College, Boston, and a practicing psychologist, Solomon Schimmel here addresses the theme of the seven deadly sins. He argues that the category of "sin" has been neglected by "secularists," whereas the "sins of tradition, and particularly the seven deadly ones, are primarily concerned with what it means to be human and humane and the responsibility that we have to fulfill if we want to be considered as such." "Pleasure," he says, "will give way to unhappiness because it alone cannot sustain us spiritually," and "most sins . . . concern the core of what we are, of what we can become, and most importantly, of what we should aspire to be. Amoral psychology is uncomfortable with 'oughts'—it prefers to think that it can deal with the facts about human nature, shunning values."

To conduct his "reflections on human nature," Schimmel calls upon three great moral traditions—Judaism, Greco-Roman moral philosophy, and Christianity—and, as he tells us, also "culls the psychological insights of poets such as Chaucer, Dante, Shakespeare, and Milton."

The book opens with a brief survey of "the three great moral traditions on sin and vice," and then proceeds to a chapter-by-chapter collection of thoughts on each of the seven deadly sins: pride, envy, anger, lust, gluttony, greed, and sloth—the last of which he defines as "the loss of one's spiritual moorings in life" (where the discussion shades over into depression, anomie, despair).

The final chapter deals with "sin and responsibility." Here the issue is free will vs. determinism. "My own view," he avers,

> is that the determinist model is more scientifically useful than the free-will one in the search for a better understanding of why we behave as we do. However, our use of the language of freedom remains valuable and even necessary. It enhances our self-esteem, encourages us to develop self-control, and reminds us how limited are our understanding

JACOB NEUSNER *is Distinguished Research Professor of Religious Studies at the University of South Florida, Tampa, and Life Member, Clare Hall, Cambridge University. His latest book is* From Philosophy to Religion: The Transformation of Judaism *(University of Illinois Press, 1992).*

THOMAS V. MORRIS

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of behavior and our ability to predict and control it.

In more concrete terms: "When considering the responsibility for certain sins or crimes, the free-will model will often be unjustifiably harsh, and the determinist model unjustifiably lenient." Here is Schimmel's conclusion:

> We have seen that many discussions of sin and vice in classical and religious literature are aesthetic gems which make fascinating reading. Many great thinkers . . . were also brilliant stylists. They merged content and form to create powerful works that can be read repeatedly with profit and delight. . . . If contemporary therapists made greater use in treatment of the powerful appeal of art and imagination, they would probably have greater and more lasting impact. Perhaps the tantrums of the angry, the stinginess of the miser, the maliciousness of the envious, and the voraciousness of the glutton would decrease, if they periodically read literature or watched films in which the ludicrousness and self-destructive nature of their sins were portrayed. Therapists should at least test the hypothesis that the aesthetic-dramatic power of treatment programs can improve their chances of success.

Within the topical program at hand, the seven chapters that form the shank of the book follow a single pattern: an allusion to a contemporary event (often, the Gulf War), a case ("a patient of mine was . . ."), the particular sin as treated in Judaism, Christianity, Greco-Roman and medieval writings (very, very heavily quoted), contemporary "moralists, psychological comments [often: more cases], and so on."

In other words, Schimmel has taken a perfectly good idea—indeed, a potentially fascinating one—and turned it into little more than a collection of banalities and commonplaces. That a book should, as this one does, appeal to aesthetics in such lifeless prose, announce portentously the discovery of the obvious, and propose a thesis that is never either fully analyzed or argued, leaves one wondering what both author and publisher might have had in their minds. One very special achievement, however, Schimmel must be credited for: he has managed to make sin boring.

HOW HAS HE succeeded in turning an important, even fascinating, subject into a pedestrian one? By ignoring the creative thinkers of our own time who have conducted sustained and rigorous thought on Schimmel's own theme: human nature on the one side, ethics and moral responsibility on the other. Schimmel treats the writings of Reform rabbis with their homiletical free association, but he ignores, for example, Bernard Gert's great book, *The Moral Rules*—a work that has been in print for decades. Nor is this the only lacuna; there are even bigger ones in his strange canon. The name of Kant doesn't appear in the bibliography, nor does that of Hobbes.

Why people commit the seven deadly sins doesn't really interest Schimmel, despite his claims of "reflect[ing] on human nature." Schimmel leaps over the great philosophers and moral theologians of our own day, as though no one but he were interested in why people sin or what sin is.

As far as he seems to be concerned, the vast academic literature of morality, both philosophical and theological, the enormous and vigorous debates on personality and culture, character and conscience, public policy and religious conviction—these might as well have taken place on the moon. Thus instead of addressing the issues on which, in real life, theological or philosophical debate raised controverted possibilities, and about which people such as Maimonides or Aquinas, Milton or Shakespeare, not to mention Jesus or Plato or Moses, took up what were, and were meant to be, highly partisan positions, he merely invokes, by quotation, the authority of this one or that one. So the honest debate of the past is transformed into a commonplace book of maxims and adages.

IN THE END, Schimmel's failure derives from addressing a theological question without the tools of theology, and a philosophical problem without making a study of philosophy. He talks about religion, but his is an essentially secular mode of thought. He condemns secularists for ignoring the writers he reads. But how theological a mind do psychologists need in order to take the position that while "the determinist model is more scientifically useful," it's okay to "use the language of freedom" because after all that language is useful, too. In other words, you don't have to believe in free will, but if you persuade people they have it, they can control themselves.

But the Judaic, Christian, and classical philosophers and theologians really believed in the things that they were saying. They did not argue that while there are better ways of thought or analysis, by writing nice religious prose they could solve problems. Judaic and Christian teaching on the seven deadly sins defined sin as rebellion against God. But in the pages of this book, God makes no appearance at all. Issues of authentic faith in the living, commanding God, who demands virtue and condemns sin, likewise never arise.

All Schimmel really shows us is, to borrow from the late Fats Waller, if you don't know what theology is, don't mess with it. He seems to think that sin has something to do with aesthetics, perhaps because some philosophers and theologians write great prose. But if they do, it is because they think great thoughts and find great words for

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expressing them. No wonder, then, that Schimmel reduces his message to advising other therapists to get patients to go see movies that portray their vices as ludicrous.

This finally silly book underscores the pathos of the instrumental theory of religiosity: you can't have the advantages of religion if you're not religious. Religion is not useful. It's true. Or it's not true. But it's never meant to be merely useful.

Why Animals Came in from the Cold

THE COVENANT OF THE WILD: WHY ANIMALS CHOSE DOMESTICATION. By STEVEN BUDIANSKY. *Morrow. 190 pp. $18.*

Reviewed by **Thomas Sieger Derr**

HAVING YET AGAIN picked up the garbage the raccoons repeatedly spill in my backyard, I was well prepared for Steven Budiansky's *The Covenant of the Wild.* These wily creatures, who by all accounts are enjoying a population boom of their own, are a fine illustration of Budiansky's thesis that many animals, far from being threatened by human activity, have positively flourished by choosing to live in proximity to us.

His argument is that many species, as part of their evolutionary strategy, "came in from the cold," pegged their fortunes to human beings, and now cannot survive without us. This is hardly a disaster, for the strategy has been extraordinarily successful. Their choice to associate with man means they are protected so their number can increase, whereas the wild species have to struggle to survive. Horses, for example, would be extinct today if they hadn't been domesticated. This means that domesticated animals are "permanent juveniles, dependent on us for care." But they are also supremely well-adapted to their environment, more so than wild animals. Even many animals who fall short of true domestication have flourished by adapting to humans, such as, famously, mice and rats—and my raccoons.

The book is full of examples of birds, fish, insects, and larger animals that have cooperated with other species to their mutual advantage. This is the principle of "coevolution," and Budiansky applies it to the relation between humans and animals: both are benefited by domestication. The advantage is mutual even when it doesn't appear to be. Cattle raised for slaughter (or otherwise "exploited" by humans) get something in return, believe it or not. They get species protection, the survival of their kind.

Domestication has not been the result of deliberate human decision, "taming" (as those who wish to undo it wrongly assume), but of evolutionary forces larger than simple human effort. Or, as Budiansky puts it, animals chose us as much as we chose them. One may even ask, and he does, "Who tamed whom?" Domestication is possible only with species already predisposed to it. It is not, then, a case of man despoiling or enslaving nature. In fact, humans are not able to domesticate wild species that are not so predisposed, though we may make pets of some individuals. The wild traits remain, and the animal may even be dangerous to us, as in the cases of those "tame" wolves that have assaulted humans.

BUDIANSKY IDENTIFIES the evolutionary process that produced domestication as "neotony," or juvenilization—the fact that animal infantile behaviors are rewarded. We prefer animals who are friendly to us, solicitous of our care, and thus useful, or, the author suggests, which arouse an innate human preference for the cute and cuddly young. The normal adult "wild" behavior pattern has none of these attractions. Domesticated animals show the traits of the young of their wild cousins. They treat us as if we were members of their own species, not discriminating as adult wild animals would. (Budiansky remarks that though we often speak of a dog that thinks it is human, it is more likely that the dog thinks that the humans are dogs.)

The principal target of this cogent polemic is the fellowship of nature romantics, mostly people who don't make their living from the land. Budiansky, an urbanite journalist turned amateur farmer ("impostor farmer," he says self-deprecatingly), knows from painful experience that nature is harsh. Moreover, human beings do not make it harsh by their own cruelty—it is already so. People who work with nature, with animals and the land, know that its harshness, pain, and death are inevitable and cannot be denied. This does not make them cruel people; on the contrary, it broadens their sense of existence and gives them a more realistic perspective. (But it does make the author himself very pessimistic on one important matter: in a brief passing flirtation with theodicy, he infers the absence of a good Creator from the cruelty of nature, in effect employing the design argument in reverse.)

Even such a word as "harsh" is a moral term of our making—as are terms like "rights" and "exploitation"—and irrelevant to nature, which is simply amoral. We are wrong, then, to intervene by protecting animals from predators and starvation, for that is imposing a moral system on nature where it doesn't belong.

Budiansky does in the end suggest that humans bear *some* responsibilities for nature, and that there is such a thing as a "natural ethic"; but he is most determined first to eradicate the kind of ecological ethics whose assumption is that human beings have imposed their wicked ways on nature and should repent and leave nature alone for a while, or better yet return the natural world to a pre-industrial or even pre-human wildness. He says that such an assumption is nonsense; man, too, is part of natural evolution. The idea of pure nature, apart from man, has been an ar-

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tificial construct for ten thousand years. Cutting human needs out of the equation, e.g., saving animals without regard to effects on the humans who use them, distorts the natural balance of an ecosystem that must include man.

There is no going back to the hunter-gatherer society before agriculture permanently transformed human and animal and plant life. Nor were those primitive peoples ecological heroes, living in tune with their environment in a sustainable way. They brought on ecological disasters as readily as any people in the industrial age.

IN SHORT, Budiansky rejects the idea of a golden age of natural harmony. Such long-term changes as the decline of wild species are just another chapter in the long history of nature's variability: "New ecological balances have repeatedly replaced old as mass extinction has followed mass extinction."

The author reserves some especially harsh words for that subspecies of nature romantic, the animal rights advocate. He is angry at the movement for its confrontational tactics, playing shamelessly and even deceitfully to a know-nothing urban audience. He is caustic about the movement's anthropomorphism, which seems to stem from ignorance of the life of real animals. He characterizes animal rights advocacy as "arid philosophizing, public buffoonery, and underground terrorism—a combination that does not exactly add up to a winning public relations strategy."

The movement has, nevertheless, been irritatingly successful in insinuating its simplistic views of animals into the public consciousness, which makes Budiansky's sallies against its follies particularly enjoyable. Take the case of the "have-a-heart" traps, which catch animals not wanted in homes or barnyards without harming them, so that they may be released into the wild. Budiansky observes of the putative kindness of these traps that the released animals either come back to human habitation or freeze or starve or get eaten in the wild—because they can't cope there.

One may come almost to the end of this book convinced that its author is a kind of fatalist who views with equanimity the impact of humankind on the rest of the natural world and believes that there are no moral lessons, no environmental ethic, evident in the evolutionary process to date. But Budiansky does not leave it at that. He concludes that since humans and domestic animals have chosen each other in a kind of bargain, and since we are the dominant partner, we *are* responsible for the creatures. Indeed, given the inexorability of evolutionary forces, we could not renounce this responsibility if we tried. Nevertheless we have come to a stage in evolution that favors cooperative forces and interdependence, and which disfavors independent wild creatures that occupy specialized and highly vulnerable niches. He quotes Raymond Coppinger: "The King of Beasts [has] been outcompeted by the cooperative strategy of the house cat."

BEING RESPONSIBLE for the animals certainly does not mean that we must cease to "exploit" them. Precisely if we take the long view of the evolutionary process, it is possible for us to use animals for our own purposes and yet at the same time respect them and be responsible for them. Conflict among species is inevitable and not wrong; and if we understand that, we can arrive at a "mature moral sense," something quite other than that put to us by the animal rights movement and its kindred spirits among the environmentalists.

For all that there is to admire in this book, however, one may fairly ask of its author what, at the end, is left of human intentionality and will and uniqueness. The notion of responsibility advanced here has little substantive content beyond acceptance of the inevitability of large evolutionary forces. It is true that humans can selectively alter evolution, by deliberate breeding, for example; but this is only a small part of the process and is dwarfed by those larger, inexorable forces, operating in both animals and man at the unconscious level, "a humbling testimony to the less than complete control we exert over the world, our myths about ourselves notwithstanding."

After all, then, there is a kind of fatalism at work here, and one wonders how far Budiansky would follow it. Would it be "bad," for example, if the human race were to become extinct as the result of these inexorable forces? Does nature's amorality mean that we ought not attempt to impose our own moral order on it—at least to the extent of our ability? Budiansky's answer is not always clear. At one point he seems to say that we may, indeed must, undertake such an imposition. But at the same time we are cautioned that we had better be humble and tentative about our decisions, because they can at best only be compromises: we can't be certain that any given action is absolutely right, and ultimately it is not likely to matter very much what we try to do anyway.

Thus a fine book, a useful book, even an entertaining and wonderfully readable book—but *The Covenant of the Wild* neither calls us to arms nor offers compelling instruction. In Budiansky's nature there is little for us humans to do but resign ourselves, "maturely," to our tiny part in a great drama—and that cannot be a fully satisfactory prescription for those who require of themselves that they be morally responsible.

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Peter L. Berger

Social Ethics in a Post-Socialist World

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The Moral Fragility of Constitutionalism

AMERICA'S CONSTITUTIONAL SOUL. By HARVEY C. MANSFIELD, JR. *Johns Hopkins University Press. 236 pp. $32.*

Reviewed by **Robert P. George**

IN THIS COLLECTION of characteristically brilliant essays, Harvey C. Mansfield Jr., one of our nation's most eminent conservative political theorists, defends the American Constitution as "the most glorious product of modern political science and still its best justification." The achievement of our nation's founders, according to Mansfield, was "to introduce a new era of human liberty" by thinking realistically and well about the problems of politics.

Today, however, the founders' achievement is threatened "by the galloping informality or increasing democratism of our politics." "Postmoderns" have become "disillusioned with reason, enlightenment, progress, and liberal democracy." They have grown contemptuous of constitutional formalities that sometimes, and by design, function as obstacles standing in the way of the popular will. Even the political scientists "have become rampant democratizers because they have lost faith in reason." Far from being part of the solution, political science has become a major part of the problem.

Mansfield's criticisms of "increasing democratism" and "rampant democratizers" should not lead anyone to suppose that he is against democracy or in favor of some authoritarian alternative. Far from it. What Mansfield says of the framers of our Constitution can truly be said of Mansfield himself:

> They distrusted democracy, but not because they loved aristocracy. They distrusted democracy for the same reason they rejected aristocracy—because they distrusted human nature. . . . To make popular government work well, they thought it necessary to prevent a representative, constitutional republic from descending to the extremes of democracy, in which people under the influence of demagogues make all decisions actively and immediately.

Nor should anyone imagine that Mansfield's defense of limited government reflects an ACLU-type (mis)understanding of constitutional rights as protecting individual "lifestyle autonomy" or subjective "moral self-definition." He is rightly contemptuous of the free-wheeling judicial review by which legal elites, in the law schools and on the bench, have prosecuted the liberal social agenda under the pretext of interpreting the Constitution. Mansfield's ideas of limited government and the rule of law extend also to the judiciary. Here too his thought is in harmony with the political science that produced the Constitution.

MANSFIELD is the rare political scientist these days who has anything interesting to say about what ordinary people mean and understand by the term "politics." Part One of his book, comprising four essays, comments on the American elections of 1980, '82, '84, and '88, respectively. He shows how each election had important constitutional implications. He frankly declares himself in favor of the Reagan revolution, yet does not hesitate to criticize the conservative elements—libertarians, fundamentalists, establishment Republicans, neoconservatives—that joined forces to make that revolution.

Mansfield exercises his critical powers more fully and dramatically, however, when he turns to contemporary academic political science. This subject is the focus of his Introduction and a fascinating chapter entitled "Social Science and the Constitution." Never one to hunt for small game, his principal target is the great "behavioralist" political scientist Robert

ROBERT P. GEORGE *teaches philosophy of law and civil liberties in the Department of Politics at Princeton University, and is editor of* Natural Law Theory: Contemporary Essays *(Oxford, 1992).*

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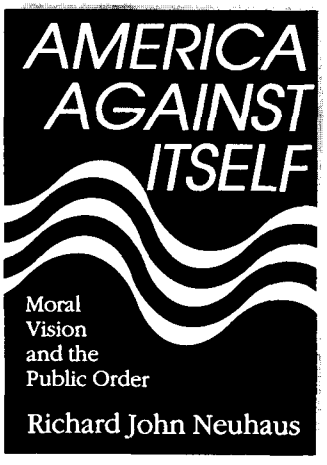

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Dahl, whose *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (1956) overthrew the reigning "institutionalist" political science that preceded it. Dahl is the most sophisticated of those modern political scientists who fault the Constitution for its formal impediments to democracy, though Dahl's "dislike does not reach the level of opposition, much less revolution, since he agrees that the formal provisions of the Constitution do not have much effect."

Dahl and his behavioralist followers find it difficult to believe that political actors can guide their behavior in accord with formal norms such as those provided by the Constitution. On the contrary, they suppose, the activities that constitute political and other social phenomena must be motivated or "caused" by extra-constitutional factors.

Mansfield attacks this behavioralist reductionism at the most fundamental level. He contends that as rational agents, people are free to deliberate and choose among possible actions, and "choice is a certain activity of the soul." Human beings are not mere *selves* capable of self-expression; as *souls*, they are capable of self-control. The political science that produced the Constitution is superior to the modern behavioralism that dismisses the effectiveness of constitutions and other formalities precisely because the older political science understood the significance of formalities, including constitutional formalities, for the governance and, indeed, the self-governance of responsible agents, beings with souls.

ANOTHER THEME of these essays is the importance of pride to citizenship in a free society and the dangers of liberal paternalism. Mansfield is keenly aware of the ways in which liberal social policy is creating a nation of dependents who can take pride neither in themselves nor in the community that created their dependency in a vain attempt to secure their interests. He singles out for special criticism affirmative action policies that enable certain groups to be "readily identified as privileged dependents."

Mansfield's writing is generally admirably clear and without pedantry. One chapter, however—unfortunately, the one likely to be of greatest interest to readers of this journal, "The Religious Issue and the Origin of Modern Constitutionalism"—is somewhat clouded. Mansfield contends that "the religious issue," namely, "whether men are ruled by God or gods, hence by divine right, or by themselves on principles they discern without necessarily referring to the Word of God in Scripture," was a central focus of debate at the origin of modern constitutionalism in the seventeenth century and, in important respects, remains relevant today. (In a later essay, speaking of fundamentalists, he remarks that "the demon of divine right still needs to be exorcised.") Religion's relevance is obscured somewhat, however, because "in our day the social issue appears to be dominant." Mansfield describes "the social issue" as "the age-old conflict between the rich and the poor."

The bulk of the essay on the religious issue is devoted to a consideration of some writings of Hobbes, Locke, and Spinoza. Mansfield concludes that "the measures these philosophers adopted to contain religion by diminishing the soul seem also to endanger freedom." That is a tantalizing proposition, but Mansfield's analysis and criticism of these thinkers is so compressed that one is left somewhat unclear both about how he got to it and whether it is correct.

In any event, Mansfield is clearly correct in observing that "constitutionalism demands a people that is independent, but not so much as to think itself capable of governing without a constitution." Even for such a people, though, constitutionalism "faces a dilemma that helps to explain the condition of democratic souls today." That dilemma reflects the continuing relevance of "the religious issue."

> When the soul seeks a higher principle than self-preservation, it is sure to find one that justifies rule of others besides yourself. . . . A higher principle that asks much of oneself may reasonably, must rationally, make demands on others.

Therefore, "to keep one person's soul from claiming jurisdiction over others . . . it is necessary to reduce his capacity for ruling himself."

Locke and his followers, understanding the need "to contain the soul by diminishing it," began replacing the classical ideas of choice and virtue with the ideas of necessity and interest. These moves, to be sure, "diminish the soul," but in that very process they jeopardize the independence and sense of responsibility without which meaningful freedom is impossible. Mere "selves," whose souls have been "flattened" to prevent their ruling others, can neither practice virtue nor rule themselves. The religious paternalism of the past is then easily replaced by the liberal social paternalism that is everywhere in evidence today: "Liberalism, which began with the rejection of paternalism on behalf of religion and virtue, now has returned to paternalism to ensure safety and comfort."

WHAT WAS MOST worthy in the Reagan revolution was its only partially successful effort to restore self-respect. As Mansfield observes (and as Reagan was savvy enough to understand), "morality is necessary to self-respect, which is the same as pride." In the end, Mansfield points out, Reagan "did little to purge the country of pornography and easy abortion, but perhaps it is enough, and certainly it is more than nothing, to speak of the immorality of these things."

The truth, however, is that talk is not enough, and it is here, finally, that the Reaganites must be called to account. Twelve years after the election of Ronald Reagan, more

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than one-and-a-half million unborn human lives are destroyed in America each year. At a time when even some liberal thinkers, most notably William Galston, are beginning to recognize that the moral decline of our culture is exacting a terrible toll in broken relationships and ruined lives, the Supreme Court—a majority of whose members were appointed by Reagan and Bush—continues to uphold unlimited abortion and other key elements of the liberal social agenda.

Morality and responsibility require the restoration of our flattened souls; and, as Mansfield teaches, this task is, in part, a political one. Mansfield is correct, however, to warn us that this restoration is not without risks of its own. Statesmen must be courageous enough to take these risks, yet prudent enough to recognize the need to observe strictly the wise "formalities" of the Constitution, lest courage degenerate into recklessness, and honorable freedoms be lost to the demagogues.

Why Universities Went Secular

THE SECULARIZATION OF THE ACADEMY. Edited by GEORGE M. MARSDEN and BRADLEY J. LONGFIELD. *Oxford University Press. 323 pp. $35 cloth, $15.95 paper.*

Reviewed by **Paul V. Mankowski**

The Vice-Chancellor gives notice that presentation to the vacant benefice of Brantham, in the Diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich, devolves on the University. Candidature is restricted to graduates of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, who are either the kin of Sir Wolstan Dixie or who have been educated for one year at Market Bosworth School.

THE SOURCE OF the advertisement above is not P. G. Wodehouse, nor Anthony Trollope, nor even Mark Pattison. It appeared in the *Cambridge University Reporter*—in 1973. The eleven essays assembled by George Marsden and Bradley Longfield on the demise of university patronage of religion in the U.S., Canada, and Great Britain make it clear that the history of this development is not a straightforward one. Anachronisms abound: we find surprising vestiges of the old order, as with the benefice of Brantham, and surprising anticipations of the new, as in president Daniel Coit Gilman's success stimulating graduate research at Johns Hopkins. David Bebbington, Philip Gleason, D. G. Hart, Robert Wood Lynn, George Rawlyk, and

PAUL V. MANKOWSKI, S.J., *a frequent contributor to* FIRST THINGS, *is a doctoral student in Comparative Semitic Philology at Harvard University.*

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James Turner add their own scholarship to that of Marsden and Longfield in attempting to track and illuminate the subtle, often paradoxical, forces that, in a century and a half, effected a nearly complete inversion of the religious culture of the academy.

The studies presented address the predicament of religion at state universities as well as that of church-supported colleges. Denominational schools of the nineteenth century characteristically placed great stress on cultivating a learned piety in their students; it is striking to what extent this concern was shared by the state institutions as well. Bradley Longfield tells us that "In the 1850s the first class on Monday morning for *all* students at the University of Michigan was Greek New Testament. This was intended not only to teach the Scriptures but also 'to keep the students from violating the Sabbath by pursuing secular studies.' In a similar manner, Minnesota did not hold classes on Monday for fear the students would violate the Sabbath." Prior to the Civil War, Michigan required attendance at chapel twice daily. A University of Wisconsin graduate in 1896 penned this recollection of her student days in Madison:

> I shall never forget my first evening in South Hall and the sweet, impressive voice of the Preceptress as she led the kneeling girls in prayer. Sunday afternoons we learned a Bible lesson which we recited in the evening.

Contemporary parents, baffled by the contents of the freshman orientation kits given their children, may find the contrast instructive.

THE GENERAL PROBLEM addressed by this volume is set out by George Marsden: "Why has Christianity, which played a leading role in Western education until a century ago, now become not only entirely peripheral to higher education but has also often come to be considered absolutely alien to whatever is important to the enterprise?" The kinds of answers offered by these authors concern the process of "secularization" understood in a descriptive, rather than a normative, sense; the word is glossed by Marsden as "the removal of some activity of life from substantive influences of traditional or organized religion," and thus bears no implicit judgment of progress or decline. The essayists, for the most part, are scrupulously attentive to the task of description and cautious in their imputation of motive.

While different kinds of pressures and populations are at work in British colleges and American, in church-supported institutions and those administered by the state, the overall picture of the change from 1850 to 1990 is one of growing intellectual confusion on the part of Christians—confusion about the nature of the university, the nature of the Church, and the social value of religion. When believers can't explain to themselves or to sympathetic fellow citizens what precisely is to be gained by the academy's patronage of religion, it seems that secularization occurs by default. Several authors make the point that ideological hostility to religion, though present in some measure from an early date, played a very minor role in the transformation. Nor does it seem that the change which came over the believers corresponds to what is usually meant by a "loss of faith"; what was lost, rather, was the confidence and the ability to make a public argument for what was increasingly seen to be a private good.

While the authors are commendably stingy in bestowing praise and blame, a good measure of the blame they do bestow is accorded to university officials for their incapacity to give a coherent account of themselves and their institutions. George Rawlyk writes:

> Despite the hollow moral platitudes offered by countless university administrators, the essential justification for the university is its technological usefulness, its crucial hegemonic role in the shaping of the consumer and the therapeutic culture.

Citing Edward Maloney's study of the place of religion at Catholic colleges, Philip Gleason says:

> The catalogues of most of the institutions Maloney surveyed no longer stated their religious objectives in clear-cut terms, and in some cases remained entirely silent about them. The presidents he talked to confessed "an inability to articulate properly their religious objectives today, even though they want[ed] the college to have a religious orientation."

Robert Wood Lynn suggests that less creditable factors played a part in the transformation of some denominational schools into ecumenical seminaries:

> Sometimes these institutions self-consciously embraced this transformation out of deep theological convictions. And then occasionally others simply drifted in this direction, prompted by "market imperatives" that lurked unacknowledged beneath the surface of talk about "service." In the latter instances, seminary representatives must be artful when supporters press them with questions about the school's tie to the sponsoring denomination. The answer given . . . depends partly on who is asking.

Few of us who have watched at close hand these "artful" representatives in action will rejoice in the recollection.

The academicians, of course, do not deserve all of the responsibility for secularization. Another common factor is that the churches themselves have gotten progressively murky about their *self-*

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understanding during the period under consideration. A Methodist minister of 1850 could almost always explain to you on doctrinal grounds why he was not a Catholic or a Presbyterian, without having to keep looking over his shoulder as he did so; the arguments were public property. But the vocabulary in which this kind of discussion must be conducted is simply not part of religious discourse in America today, and hasn't been for some time—with the exception of those "cognitive minorities" that define themselves consciously in opposition to the dominant culture.

Evelyn Waugh once remarked that the West is dying of sloth, not wrath. For the most part institutions are lost not because they are stormed by hostile outsiders but because their custodians, overcome by apathy, diffidence, and intellectual fecklessness, simply give them away. A recent visit to the Braun Room of the Harvard Divinity School found oil portraits of the nineteenth-century clerical worthies in their doctoral gowns and preaching bands gazing down on "Sacred Condoms," an exhibit of prophylactic devices filled with alphabet soup, honey, etc., which was designed (according to the University) as part of "an important ministerial conversation." This tableau might serve as an allegory of the history so skillfully detailed in *The Secularization of the Academy*—a history ending not with a bang but a whimper.

Divorce, Communitarian Style

ON DIVORCE. By LOUIS DE BONALD. Translated and with an Introduction by Nicholas Davidson. *Transaction Press. 198 pp. $27.95.*

Reviewed by **Mark C. Henrie**

ESPECIALLY in America, when we think of the Catholic intellectual tradition we tend to think exclusively of the many varieties of Thomism. And for the decades between Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879) and the Second Vatican Council, this equation was largely accurate. Before the Thomistic revival, however, nineteenth-century continental Catholicism was engaged in quite a different project, the response—the Reaction—to the French Revolution.

It is not surprising that Americans should be ignorant of this tradition, for the thinkers of the Reaction held the Enlightenment itself responsible for the European disorders with which they were contending. Consequently, they argued vociferously against many of the political institutions and social values that are at the core of the American experiment. To the American mind, there is something faintly diabolical about these philosophers of Authority. So resolute is our distaste for the "Counter-Enlightenment" that some influential thinkers—Adam Miller in Germany, Comte Louis de Bonald in France—have remained virtually entirely untranslated and therefore almost entirely unknown.

Now Nicholas Davidson and

MARK C. HENRIE *is a doctoral candidate in political theory at Harvard University.*

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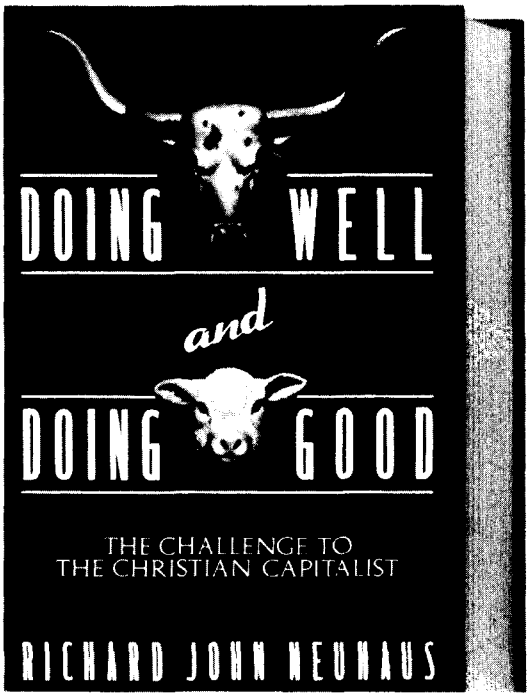

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Transaction Press have given us a first glimpse into this neglected tradition with a very competent translation of one of Bonald's principle works, his 1801 treatise, *On Divorce*. The book forcefully addresses one of the most vexing social questions in our political life, and it does so while providing a unique perspective on the "communitarian" critique of liberalism. *On Divorce* therefore deserves a much wider reading than it is likely to receive.

OF COURSE, there is much in Bonald that will appear anachronistic and even outrageous to us. He heaps scorn on democracy and defends absolute monarchy as the most natural or perfect form of polity. He ridicules gentlewomen who want to nurse their own children. He is a patriarchalist. But if we can see beyond these historical oddities, we can find in his work a rich source of new insights surprisingly relevant to today's policy disputes.

In 1792, applying the natural rights theories of the Enlightenment, the Revolution reconceived marriage as a civil contract, without sacramental meaning and as subject to dissolution as the political contract that had just been repudiated. In other words, the Revolution brought about a state of affairs we would consider "normal" today. After Napoleon's *18th Brumaire* coup d'état, however, general sentiment for a return to pre-Revolutionary normalcy brought legal divorce into question. Bonald quickly wrote *On Divorce* to influence the debates in the French Assembly on a new Civil Code. Ultimately, the traditionalists were successful, and with the Restoration in 1816, divorce again became illegal in France until 1884.

Bonald is often described as "the last scholastic," and his turgid style and passion for elaborate, systematic definition can indeed prove tedious. But he is also an empiricist who marshals an array of statistical and historical evidence for his arguments, an approach unexpected in the Catholic tradition. In fact, Robert Nisbet, who adds a short foreword to this edition, has elsewhere argued that Bonald is the progenitor of modern sociology. As a sociologist, then, Bonald cannot treat any social question in isolation from other social questions, for "society itself is only a group of *relationships*." Political disorder and domestic disorder are intimately linked for him, and thus his attack on divorce is as much an attack on detested Jacobinism.

Against the notion that marriage is simply a contract between two free and independent individuals made to further their own ends, Bonald develops a complete organic theory of society. He writes that "Society is domestic, political, and religious; it is family, State, and religion." Each of these spheres necessarily has a certain autonomy with respect to the others, yet they are also wholly interdependent. Since human beings are by nature social creatures, "marriage is at once a social, domestic, civil, and religious act; the founding act of domestic society whose interests should be guaranteed by civil authority." Bonald's central claim is that marriage cannot be reduced to a civil contract without altering the nature of the thing itself. Since for him the role of the state is not so much the protection of individuals as the protection of the rights (or interests) of "domestic society," the contractual view of marriage is seen as a corrupting invasion.

QUITE SIMPLY, Bonald argues that "the end of marriage is not the happiness of the spouses," since such happiness is available to unwed couples. Nor is the end of marriage the procreation of children, which can likewise occur without the benefit of marriage. Rather, the end of marriage is the "conservation" of children in being, and it seems this is best accomplished by permanent monogamy because of the sense of "property" in children that arises in such a relationship. (One implication of such reasoning is that affectional relations not primarily oriented toward the raising of children are a matter to which the state is indifferent. Gay "marriages" are no marriages at all.) Bonald writes, "If polygamy causes more children to be born, monogamy conserves more of them," and for Bonald, if remarriage after divorce is available, domestic society simply *is* polygamous. Such characterizations were extreme in Bonald's time, but they sound increasingly apposite in our own society, with so many mothers and children living in poverty, neglected by husbands and fathers.

Bonald can often sound surprisingly contemporary. For example, he notes the effect of divorce on women in particular and asks, "Is it not supremely unjust that the woman, having entered the family with youth and fertility, may leave it with sterility and old age, and that . . . she should be put out of the family to which she gave existence, at the time in life when nature denies her the ability to begin another one?" We now have clear statistical evidence that in America women suffer more from divorce than men, and this fact has caused even some feminists to raise the possibility of making divorce less accessible.

Perhaps Bonald's most radical challenge to us is his claim that "there *is* no family today if it can end tomorrow." This is a stark proposition, but it invites us to consider whether modern marriage is something fundamentally different from marriage in a society where divorce is an impossibility. For Bonald, "human marriage is a union with a commitment to form a society." Without that (permanent) commitment, both to spouse and to children, there can be only "concubinage," which is almost certainly how he would interpret modern marriage.

THIS INSIGHT must be stressed. While we commonly believe that divorce must be an option for those men and women trapped in rotten marriages, have we really faced the possibility that the very availability

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of divorce may itself be a *cause* of bad marriages? As individuals living under a regime of easy divorce can have no secure expectation of their "contract" lasting, they perhaps lack the incentive to give themselves fully to their spouses and their children, reserving themselves for their work or for other freedoms. Such a relationship of partial giving, always with something held back, is in turn a recipe for a bad marriage. What for Bonald is a fearsome possibility is to some extent our present reality, but we have yet to face the meaning and implications of that reality.

While he is a perfectionist in this high view of marriage, Bonald does allow for temporary legal separation of spouses under certain circumstances. Beyond this, "political power only intervenes in the spouses' contract of union because it represents the . . . child." If divorce is allowed at all, therefore, parents should be treated as deceased and the children raised as wards of the state. This follows because "a father and mother who divorce are . . . really two strong people who conspire to rob a weak one [the child], and the State which consents to this is an accomplice in their brigandage." Bonald's insistence on the primacy of the good of children in the state's relationship to families anticipates the arguments of such contemporaries as Mary Ann Glendon. But his application of a harsh sanction to support the *institution* of marriage (without regard to the perceived interests of individuals) is unique to Bonald's approach. While we would not want to contemplate the seizure of the children of divorced parents, perhaps we can find other sanctions that would alter the calculus of divorce. As Bonald says, "Choices will only be more prudent when their consequences are more serious."

So firmly wedded to the social contract tradition is the American mind that Bonald's positions on first reading can seem unintelligible. This very strangeness, however, is precisely why he should be read, for we are in a time that requires leaps of social and moral imagination. One implication of Bonald's thought is that it is possible to embrace the Supreme Court's *Griswold* decision about the right of married couples to use contraception, while repudiating the later Supreme Court decisions concerning a privacy right that culminate in *Roe v. Wade*. This is so because *Griswold* concerns the privacy of the *family*, while later decisions treat family privacy merely as an extension of a prior individual right to privacy, thereby blurring the distinction between families and other intimate affective relationships. Paradoxically, Bonald would say that while families have a right to privacy, individuals do not.

THIS LAST POINT is particularly relevant to the so-called communitarian critique of liberalism, for in Bonald we can see a *radically* communitarian vision of political and social life. He quite unabashedly begins with an idea of the state as a community of families rather than of individuals, and the family itself is seen as a series of social relations. While many communitarians when pressed would base their practical political proposals on the pursuit of happiness of individuals, Bonald is a "complete" communitarian. For him, "domestic society" is a reality, and *its* rights cannot be trumped by the rights-claims and interests of the individuals within it. If communitarianism is to be anything more than a very minor quibble within liberal individualism, it will have to assimilate the insights of Bonald and others like him.

Nicholas Davidson writes in his introduction to *On Divorce* that "as the modern world is increasingly reformed, [a] conservative approach is less and less adequate, and Bonald's investigative and restorative approach is more and more necessary." While Davidson might be overstating somewhat, he is on to something. When family values can mesmerize our politics and when even *Newsweek* can question the wisdom of no-fault divorce in a cover story, then perhaps America is ready for some creative reactions. If it is, Bonald has something to teach us.

BRIEFLY NOTED

THEOLOGY AND DIALOGUE. Edited by BRUCE D. MARSHALL. *University of Notre Dame Press. 302 pp. $14.95 paper.*

These "essays in conversation with George Lindbeck" are also essays in deserved celebration of a thinker who has done as much as anyone in the last half-century to advance ecumenical understanding with theological integrity. David Tracy, David Burrell, Nicholas Lash, Peter Ochs, and Hans Frei are among the contributors.

WHAT DID THEY THINK OF THE JEWS? Collected and edited by ALLAN GOULD. With an epilogue by PAUL JOHNSON. *Aronson. 615 pp. $50.*

Views of the chosen people by hundreds of history's most famous personages, from antiquity to modern times: Cicero, Augustine, Cervantes, Newton, Franklin, Napoleon, Lincoln, Dickens, Tolstoy, Joyce, Stalin, Churchill, Orwell, Gandhi, Raymond Chandler, Malcolm X, and on and on. This collection of essays and excerpts has no particular theme, but it makes for some fascinating reading.

CHURCH AND JEWISH PEOPLE: NEW CONSIDERATIONS. By JOHANNES CARDINAL WILLEBRANDS. *Paulist Press. 280 pp. $14.95.*

A summary of Catholic-Jewish relations since *Nostra aetate* (1965), the papal declaration that initiated a process of reconciliation between the Church and the Jewish people. The essays and addresses in this volume are not only insightful, but they are also authoritative in that their author, Johannes Cardinal Willebrands, is the former presi-

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dent of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews.

UNION AND LIBERTY: THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN C. CALHOUN. Edited by ROSS M. LENCE. *Liberty Fund. 626 pp. $35 cloth, $9.50 paper.*

Discources, essays, speeches, and letters by one of the leading American statesmen/political theorists of the nineteenth century. It includes, inter alia, Calhoun's two most significant works: *A Disquisition on Government* and *A Discourse on the Constitution and Government of the United States.* Calhoun's endorsement of slavery and his denial of natural rights provide a chastening reminder that brilliance and originality do not necessarily mean wisdom.

A BRIDGING OF FAITHS: RELIGION AND POLITICS IN A NEW ENGLAND CITY. By N. J. DEMERATH and RHYS H. WILLIAMS. *Princeton University Press. 358 pp. $29.95.*

Two sociologists examine Springfield, Mass., a once Protestant bastion that has turned majority Catholic. The story is told in terms of the push and pulls of "secularization" and "sacralization," and the authors conclude that the former is winning in the long run, although the latter demonstrates bursts of reactive vitality in pressing questions such as abortion.

WHAT IS FAITH? ESSAYS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION. By ANTHONY KENNY. *Oxford University Press. 125 pp. $8.95 paper.*

An engaging overview of perennial questions, with some winsome connections made between Anselm and Wittgenstein on the ineffability of God. The God in question is more that of the philosophers than the Christian God revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But deftly done nonetheless.

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE: EXPLORING THE VIETNAM ANTIWAR MOVEMENT. Edited by MELVIN SMALL and WILLIAM D. HOOVER. *Syracuse University Press. 300 pp. $17.95 paper.*

It is not all that George McGovern claims in the foreword, but it is a representative and reasonably balanced overview from the left-center. Mitchell Hall's reflections on Clergy and Laity Concerned and the role of religious opposition to the war is especially well done.

THE WAY OF A PILGRIM and THE PILGRIM CONTINUES HIS WAY. *Doubleday/Image Books. 196 pp. $8.*

A fine new translation by Helen Bacovcin brings alive again the wondrous story of a nineteenth-century Russian peasant who relentlessly asks how to "pray without ceasing" and discovers the infinite reaches of the "Jesus Prayer."

OUT IN THE WORLD: GAY AND LESBIAN LIFE FROM BUENOS AIRES TO BANGKOK. By NEIL MILLER. *Random House. 364 pp. $22.*

Sympathetic reportage on homosexuals and gay activism around a large part of the world. Although not inclined to be analytical, the author is led to agree with David Greenberg and others that homosexuality and homosexual identity is not inherited but socially constructed.

PREACHING TO STRANGERS: EVANGELISM IN TODAY'S WORLD. By WILLIAM H. WILLIMON and STANLEY HAUERWAS. *Westminster/John Knox Press. 112 pp. $9.99 paper.*

Master preacher Willimon preaches and ever-provocative theologian Hauerwas tells him what is good and bad about these twelve sermons. Every preacher should preach so well, and should have such a thoughtful listener. (Not $10, not $9.95, but $9.99. Is this is a first in book pricing?)

GOD'S PEOPLES: COVENANT AND LAND IN SOUTH AFRICA, ISRAEL, AND ULSTER. By DONALD HARMAN AKENSON. *Cornell University Press. 404 pp. $29.95.*

The Queen's University historian examines the ways in which nations have employed the template of God's ancient covenant with Israel to forge their own identity. Of the three nations considered, only Israel, he believes, is moving toward a greater reliance on the covenant metaphor. He suggests that the idea of covenant will become more important as, following the collapse of empires, new and small nations attempt to assert themselves against what they perceive to be a threatening world.

THE REFINEMENT OF AMERICA: PERSONS, HOUSES, CITIES. By RICHARD L. BUSHMAN. *Knopf. 504 pp. $40.*

A gracefully written account of the ascendancy of gentility over 300 years of the American republic. Bushman, distinguished historian at Columbia University, is alert to the role of oldline Protestantism in this story and has some gentle fun with Horace Bushnell, who exhorted Christians to emulate God who, as demonstrated by the creation, has exquisite taste.

WHEN TIME SHALL BE NO MORE: PROPHECY BELIEF IN MODERN AMERICAN CULTURE. By PAUL BOYER. *Harvard University Press. 467 pp. $29.95.*

A detailed survey of Bible prophecy in popular American religion. The book is long on information, short on analysis.

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

When Shepherds Go Astray

Donahue, Oprah, and Geraldo have all had a grand time weighing in on the subject, and Father Andrew Greeley has been writing up a storm denouncing "the silence" of the Church about it. In the foreword to a new book, Greeley says that priestly pedophilia is "perhaps the most serious crisis Catholicism has faced since the Reformation." The most serious crisis in more than 450 years? One thinks of—to cite but a few examples—the wars of religion, the assault of the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*, the battles over the papal states, the storm surrounding infallibility, and the widespread dissent from *Humanae Vitae*, the 1968 encyclical on contraception (and Greeley's previous candidate for the most serious crisis since the Reformation). Fr. Greeley's hype does not bear close examination. But there is no doubt that sexual misconduct by priests, including pedophilia, has become a very, very big problem.

Greeley's foreword is to a new book from Doubleday, *Lead Us Not Into Temptation: Catholic Priests and the Sexual Abuse of Children* by Jason Berry. As a reporter with a small Louisiana newspaper, Berry more than a decade ago played a leading role in surfacing the question of priests abusing children. He has been on the trail of such cases ever since and, given the temptations to sensationalism on this topic, his book is, all in all, an effort to deal with it responsibly. The minutely detailed accounts of journalistic politics and courtroom procedure will likely not hold the attention of most readers for 400 pages, but it will be of interest to reporters and lawyers (especially the latter, who are cashing in on these scandals with multimillion-dollar suits). Then too, Berry is at points a bit too breathless about his journalistic derring-do, comparing himself, for example, with Woodward and Bernstein of Watergate fame. He even has his own Louisiana Deep Throat, in this case called Chalice.

From 1982 to the present, approximately 400 priests nationwide (out of a total, at present, of 54,000 priests) have been reported to church or civil authorities for molesting children, mostly adolescents. In other words, about one-half of one percent of priests active during that period have been reported. Needless to say, reports are not always substantiated, and other instances go unreported. Some of the most publicized cases go back to incidents from fifteen or even thirty years ago. According to Sister Canice Connors, a staff therapist at St. Luke Institute in Maryland, treatment centers dealing with priest pedophiles have concluded that of every 100 priests accused of sexual abuse of minors and treated for it, three would qualify as predators, another six as fixated pedophiles (with exclusive attraction to prepubescent children). The remaining ninety-one would more accurately be described as ephebophiles, men who have acted out sexually with adolescents.

Without detracting in any way from the hurt inflicted upon children and teenagers, and without fudging the grave betrayal of a solemn trust, it is important to guard against hysteria and exaggeration. Sexual misconduct by priests is a matter of great urgency, and it would be so if it involved only one priest in a thousand. It might be argued that the crisis is not all that new, whether one is discussing priests, Protestant clergy, psychotherapists, medical doctors, scoutmasters, or lawyers. Part of the sense of crisis is that behavior once winked at is now the cause of very vocal outrage. Witness the changing definitions of sexual harassment and even of rape promoted by some feminists. The most innocent (as it used to be thought) erotic allusion, if it is declared to be unwelcome, becomes a matter of criminal law. Little wonder that our society is in a state of

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massive confusion about sexual rules, creating a situation easily exploited by the Donahues and Geraldos who champion sexual liberation while, at the same time, waxing indignant about behavior that is politically incorrect. Ours is a state of moral incoherence that is not conducive to calm deliberation about very real problems.

Jason Berry tends to the view that celibacy is the Catholic problem and married clergy is the answer. He recognizes, however, that having married clergy has not prevented widespread sexual depredations, both heterosexual and homosexual, among Protestant clergy. This reality has been explored by others such as Lloyd Rediger in *Ministry and Sexuality: Cases, Counseling, and Care* (Fortress, 1990). The spreading scandal reaches far beyond the notorious cases of televangelists such as Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker, increasingly involving prominent figures in the oldline Protestant churches.

Only within the last few months, cases have been multiplying. The Episcopal priest with chief responsibility for framing his church's position on homosexuality was forced to resign following charges that he sexually abused young men in his upstate New York parish. One of the more respected theologians in the country, a Protestant teaching at Notre Dame, has been suspended by his church for sexual misconduct with women, as has the pastor of the prestigious Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C. A bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has been forced to resign, and the man elected this summer as stated clerk of the Presbyterian Church (USA) abruptly stepped down after he learned that he had been charged with sexual misconduct (a charge later found to be without "probable grounds").

Does the growing number of accusations mean that clergy are more sexually licentious today or is it simply that there is a lower tolerance of deviance from established expectations? It would be remarkable if clergy, too, were not affected by the "sexual revolution" that was launched in the sixties. Indeed, many in the oldline churches as well as "progressive" Catholics led the charge against putatively oppressive sexual inhibitions, advocating what were termed liberating lifestyles. Among social activists it was (and in some circles still is) urged that the churches are excessively preoccupied with sexual morality when the real challenge is systemic social and political change. The late Ralph David Abernathy, in his unjustly neglected memoir of his work with Dr. Martin Luther King, *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down*, offers a candid picture of the sexual license that marked "the movement." Many liberal clergy assumed that permission slips had been issued, at least tacitly, for the doing of what was formerly forbidden.

Nor should one underestimate the importance of the dramatic increase of divorce among oldline Protestant clergy. It was not so long ago that divorce was sure grounds for demitting ministerial office. In some churches today, the rate of clergy divorce matches that of the general population, and it is not unusual to have ministers and bishops who have been divorced more than once. The acceptance of what some term serial monogamy clearly reflects a major change in the understanding of the vows of marriage. On the Catholic side, many priests ordained in the sixties and seventies were given the impression that the Church was about to relax the celibacy requirement and allow marriage. Understandably, they viewed the celibacy vow to be somewhat tentative and not to be taken at face value. For both Catholics and Protestants, these changes were accompanied by an insinuation from the general culture of the dogma that sexual self-expression is essential to spiritual and psychological "wholeness." "The heart wants what the heart wants," as that eminent public philosopher, Woody Allen, recently put it.

Despite the proposals for changing traditional sexual ethics that are being brought before oldline churches (notably United Methodist, Presbyterian USA, ELCA Lutheran, and Episcopalian), there are signs today of a growing sobriety about sexuality. More people seem to be recognizing that the sexual revolution did not deliver on its promises. The current rash of accusations of misconduct suggests that we are in something of a time warp. Not only are they frequently related to acts committed years ago, but there is a climate of growing skepticism about whether some of the acts were committed at all. The skepticism is fed by psychologically dubious methods of "retrieval" in which people consult their Inner Child to discover molestations that supposedly happened as far back as infancy. The skepticism is also fed by several much-publicized instances in recent years in which unsupported charges of sexual abuse in day care centers sparked mass hysteria in communities around the country.

There is one aspect of this messy situation, however, that is neither vestigial nor imaginary. That is the impact of homosexuality and gay activism in the culture and the churches. Those who have studied these matters agree that pedophilia is not always connected with homosexuality, but there is a high correlation. The Berry book is forthright in describing the degree to which homosexuality made inroads in some Catholic seminaries during the seventies and early eighties. Although the evidence is largely anecdotal, it would seem that some faculties and

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student bodies took on a distinctly lavender hue. Led by the Vatican and a few energetic American bishops, the Catholic Church, undeterred by charges of "homophobia," has in recent years demonstrated a determination to put its house in order. This includes screening out candidates for priesthood who do not accept, or would likely have difficulties in living by, the Church's teaching on chastity. Jason Berry, very much a liberal, evidences surprise that it is most often conservatives in the Catholic Church who have most relentlessly pressed the bishops on this score. To his credit, Berry makes short shrift of progressive, sometimes overtly homosexual, priests who complain about the Church's increasing "lack of understanding" for deviant behavior.

The situation in liberal Protestant seminaries and divinity schools is more complex. Most of them have well established and powerful gay caucuses, and some have very active gays on the faculty. Here the screening process is reversed. In faculty appointments and student life, those who are likely to be screened out are people who think homosexuality is something to be screened out. Regardless of the official positions taken by their churches, it would seem that at least some oldline denominations are and will be ordaining more and more active homosexuals to the ministry. Unlike the Catholic Church, these denominations frequently do not have canonical control over the education of their clergy. Unlike their own constituencies, denominational leaderships are often sympathetic to the gay agenda. And leaders who might personally be convinced of the wisdom of the moral tradition have little stomach for taking on the seminaries, knowing full well the wrath aroused by the accusation that they are violating academic freedom or endorsing homophobia.

Of course there have always been some fornicators, adulterers, sodomites, and pedophiles among the Christian clergy. The relatively new thing is that, except for pedophilia, those very terms are thought to be anachronistic and offensive by many. All the churches maintain that their ministers should exemplify Christian character, requiring at ordination that they promise—in these or similar words—to "adorn the gospel with a holy life." Until recently it was unanimously understood and taught that a holy life includes limiting sexual intercourse to marriage (and, until recently, it was not necessary to specify "heterosexual marriage").

In the training and discipline of clergy, the teaching and, usually, the practice seem to be reasonably secure among evangelical Protestants. Among Catholics the teaching has been consistent, and where the practice has been frayed it is being mended. In oldline or liberal Protestantism, however, the situation is very different. There the question would appear to be: How long can the denominational membership hold out against the moral revisionism taught and practiced by the institutions responsible for training the clergy?

Christianity, as we are constantly reminded, does not live in a cultural vacuum. It is not surprising that cultural convulsions regarding sexuality have an impact on the churches. The churches are, one might argue, at least as much culturally influenced as they are a cultural influence. The growing attention to sexual misconduct by the clergy, some complain, is unfairly focused on the Catholic Church. There is something to that. For various reasons, and for better and worse, Catholicism makes for better press, especially of the sensationalist kind. It is, as Mort Sahl put it, "the church people mean when they say 'the Church.'" But it is doubtful that the Catholic Church comes in for more unfavorable media attention than do Protestant fundamentalists, as witness the feeding frenzy of the press surrounding the Swaggart and Bakker scandals.

The fact is that the media are inclined to view Catholics and fundamentalists as threatening, if not as the declared enemy. And that because they are perceived to be asserting standards that are rejected by a largely libertine elite culture. As has been remarked before in these pages, the surest way to avoid being accused of not living up to the standards that you profess is to profess no standards. Those communities that dare to stand for something must be prepared to take the heat when their leaders stumble and fall.

Of course one can call it hypocrisy when the media work themselves up into excitements of moral indignation over the breaking of rules that they themselves do not accept. But that is rather beside the point. Religious communities are rightly judged by the standards that they embrace, not by their critics' standards or lack thereof. Then too, "the news" is a very big business, and dirt about other people—especially people who dare to "stand for something"—is very good for sales. Nor should we ignore the fact that there are a great many people, also in the media, who are driven by a passion to discredit morally normative institutions and patterns of behavior. The very idea that anything is morally normative, especially in the realm of sexuality, is viewed as offensive and an infringement of personal freedom. Even pedophilia and incest, while still generally censured, have their apologists among enlightened folk who would place no limits on the infinite variations of "meaningful relationships."

But it will not do to blame the messenger, no matter how corrupt, for the message. The increasingly publicized sexual misconduct of clergy is the fault of clergy, and of those

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responsible for their training and supervision. Some religious communities will avoid being criticized for breaking the rules by the simple expedient of abandoning the rules. Those communities that affirm a moral tradition that provides clear, if not easy, guidance through the turbulent confusions of human sexuality will be judged, and rightly judged, by the tradition that they espouse. Such churches should be braced for more negative publicity as incidents from the past, even the distant past, come to light and work their way through the courts. These things come in waves, and it seems likely that this wave has not yet crested.

Meanwhile, having been humbled and sobered, the churches might be in a better position to help mend the culture after the devastations wrought by the sexual revolution. The agitations of those within the churches who are still urging the churches to join that revolution must be gently but firmly repulsed. Ministries of care and healing must be strengthened for spouses (mainly women) who have been cruelly divorced, for children who have been abused, and for clergy who were led to believe that they had permission to do the impermissible. And out of this calamity may come, please God, a renewed awareness of the faithlessness of human passion, and of our utter dependence upon grace, which is finally the grace of forgiveness. The sexual turpitude of the clergy is not the greatest crisis of the last four centuries, nor even the greatest crisis of the last ten years. But it is a crisis.

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CHARLES COLSON: FAITH ACTIVE IN LOVE

The point is not that capital punishment is the right thing, but Charles Colson of Prison Fellowship tells a story of a different and holy fear that attends it. On an Easter Sunday he visited Rusty Woomer, convicted of murder, a few days before he was scheduled to be electrocuted. Woomer was converted in prison and had this to say: "I think of His radiance, His power, His love. It doesn't scare you that someone loves you enough that He can forgive you for anything that you do? It scares me sometimes. He is something that we have not got any idea what it is going to be like when we meet Him. . . . His love is so strong that it might hurt us when we meet Him." Colson comments: "Few people on the planet know the mystery that for Rusty was solved by the state of South Carolina: the time of their own death. He was not caught unaware, unrepentant, distracted by the things of this world and distant from his Lord. Yet Rusty's final journey is one we will all make. For in reality, we are all on death row."

The story is from a new book, *The Body: Being Light in Darkness* (Word). It is thoroughly popular, laced with quotations drawn from sources classical and contemporary, filled with anecdotes based in Colson's amazingly diverse experience, and, like his many earlier books, will probably sell in the hundreds of thousands. In addition to bringing people to Christ and building them up in Christ, the book has a very serious theological purpose: to alert evangelical Protestants to the inseparable connection between Christ and his Church—"The Body" of the title. Were the word not in such bad repute with most evangelicals, one might say that the purpose is emphatically "ecumenical." Colson wants to remedy the radical individualism that is endemic to evangelicalism by underscoring the communal nature of the Christian life and of Christian witness in the world ("light in darkness").

Next to Billy Graham, Chuck Colson may well be the most widely respected and trusted figure in American evangelicalism. That he was once Richard Nixon's most notorious "hit man" makes him suspect in the eyes of the general media. To Christians who understand the meaning of conversion, the dramatic change is a confirming credential. The remarkable story of Prison Fellowship, which Colson founded and continues to lead, is almost entirely unknown outside evangelicalism. Prison Fellowship, which operates in more than sixty countries, has hundreds of employees, tens of thousands of volunteers, and has changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of convicts.

Nobody is more forgotten, in this society and others, than the prisoner. There are almost a million of them in the United States alone. Just across the river from Manhattan is Riker's Island, where at any given time upward of 25,000 young men and women are incarcerated, but it is doubtful that those who look out the windows of their luxury apartments over the East River are aware of it. The next time you fly into LaGuardia look down on the sprawling cell blocks and at least say a prayer for them.

When the media do pay attention, they will frequently write about the work being done in prisons by the black Muslims. That work is not unimportant in effecting a measure of moral improvement. Much larger and more intensive, however, is the work of Prison Fellowship. The black Muslims have the panache of being exotic.

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Our cultured despisers of home-grown religion think that they know what Prison Fellowship is up to, but of course they don't. Then there is the problem of Colson's sordid political background. Surely he is a conservative far beyond the pale.

In fact, Colson and Prison Fellowship have been pushing a program of far-reaching prison reform. It has received very little attention. The time is not right, it seems, for such reform. Too many conservatives just want to put the bad guys in jail, and most other people, including most liberals, don't want to know about what goes on there. Part of the offense of the much-decried Willie Horton ad in the 1988 campaign was that it reminded people of a world that they would rather forget—a world of prison, crime, and a justice system in derisive disarray. That is the world to which Prison Fellowship attends every day.

So this is a plug for *The Body*, and an occasion to praise the work of Prison Fellowship and its founder. You don't have to be an evangelical Protestant to recognize that Chuck Colson is becoming one of the preeminent religious figures in America. His ministry with the forgettable and forgotten demonstrates a "preferential option for the poor" that is a bracing challenge to those Christians to whom such language comes too easily. His thoughtful determination to make the necessary linkages between faith, moral judgment, and social change might well be emulated by Jews and Christians at every point along the religio-political spectrum. Do we say all this because Chuck Colson is a friend? Perhaps. In part. More accurately, Chuck Colson is a friend because all that is said above is true.

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RETURNING TO EARTH

The news industry's Imperious Now has intervened again and again with other urgencies real and contrived, but some readers may remember the squall over Dan Quayle and Murphy Brown. At that time Maggie Gallagher published on the op-ed page of the *New York Times* "An Unwed Mother for Quayle," and it deserves not to get lost in the memory hole of yesterday's news. Ms. Gallagher, too, is a journalist and unwed mother, but in the real world. After ten years as an unwed mother, she has some thoughts on what it takes. For women thinking of raising children outside marriage, she says, it helps to:

"1. Have relatively affluent parents who got and stayed married themselves. That way you can rely on their marriage, rather than your own, to give your child the emotional and financial emergency support system he or she needs.
2. Be able to choose a profession with flexible hours that allow you to take time out and work from home, and be sure to get an Ivy League degree first.
3. (This one is especially tricky.) Find a boss who doesn't mind if you bring a sick 4-year-old and his dinosaurs to the office, which will happen regularly.
4. Accept that, even if you make a good living, you are going to have far less money than anyone you know—except for other single mothers.
5. Expect to give up all the advantages of single life—freedom, romance, travel—and receive none of the advantages of marriage—emotional, logistical, and financial support.
6. Prepare for the nights when your child cries himself to sleep in your arms, wondering why his father doesn't love him. (If your child is allowed to express his real feelings, there will be many such occasions.)"

The evidence that marriage is the best social program ever invented for raising children is overwhelming. A single woman with all the resources and assistance available to the privileged will soon discover the pain of a child's awareness of the irreplaceability of a father. Gallagher writes: "As Murphy Brown would find out if she were a real person and not a Hollywood fantasy, children not only need a father, they *long* for one, irrationally, with all the undiluted strength of a child's hopeful heart. To raise one's own child without a father may, at times, be a painful and tragic necessity, but it should never be just another lifestyle option. . . . We have to stop pretending that all choices are equally good—that single motherhood is just an alternative family form and that fathers are just another new disposable item in the nursery." St. Augustine somewhere writes about the undiluted longing of a child's hopeful heart with respect to another Father. The two, we suspect, are intimately entangled in ways that surpass our understanding.

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BIBLE SCHOLARSHIP, THE STATE OF THE ART

The *Anchor Bible Dictionary* is by almost any measure a monumental project. Just out from Doubleday, it also has all the appearances of a major achievement. There are six big volumes of about 1,200 pages each, and each is priced at $60. It has been some time since such a project has been undertaken. In the English language there was *The Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible* (five volumes, 1898-1904) and, more recently, *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (also five volumes, the first four appearing in 1962, with a supplement in 1976).

We have not begun to work with the *ABD* in detail but, reading around in it, we are greatly impressed. It should have a place in any theological library that aspires to completeness. Also impressive, and not necessarily encouraging, is the introduction by associate editor Gary A. Herion (the editor in chief is David Noel Freedman). The introduction is marked by a certain defensiveness, but it has the strong merit of candor. Herion says that every generation needs its own dictionary of the Bible, and that such a dictionary will reflect the strengths and weaknesses of biblical scholarship at the time. When the last big dictionary came out thirty years ago, he notes, the "biblical theology" movement was in full swing and there was a fairly firm scholarly consensus on the main themes of biblical history and thought. "Baldly stated," Herion writes, "it seems that scholarship at that time was more interested in presenting 'the facts' than in considering critically how we know them to be 'facts.'"

The new *ABD* is frequently marked by a preoccupation with, maybe an obsession with, epistemological and methodological questions. In many entries, substantive assertions are preceded by extended throat clearings in which authors self-consciously (and tediously) demonstrate that they are nothing if not critical. As Herion puts it, "One will be hard pressed to find in these pages any sort of sweeping historical synthesis that presumes a scholarly consensus. Scholarly consensus simply does not exist here at the end of the twentieth century." We aren't looking for "sweeping" syntheses, historical or otherwise, but it does seem that those who have devoted their lives to the study of the Bible should be prepared to venture some generalizations about what they think it is about. (Yes, yes, we know the Bible is not about just one thing; and yes, yes, we know that the Bible is a collection of many different texts; but just why, one might ask some authors, are you devoting your life to studying it, and why do you think it warrants the attention of others?)

In addition to the passion for specialization and the fine-tuned demarcation of turfs of expertise, the *ABD* reflects the striking growth of social science interests among biblical scholars, with socio-historical analyses frequently replacing the theological interpretations of earlier dictionaries. The volumes reflect also the burgeoning archeological efforts of recent decades, along with a dramatically growing interest in what previously had been viewed as marginal—an interest generated in large part by the Nag Hammadi tractates and Dead Sea scrolls, but also by the academic search for new specializations. Herion acknowledges that biblical studies are somewhat "fragmented" and that authors' conclusions are frequently hedged with qualifications (which he says are necessary qualifications but others may suspect betray the timidity of nervous expertise).

"That is simply the way responsible critical biblical scholarship tends to be practiced today," writes Herion. "One ramification of this increased specialization is evident in our long list of contributors: those who would lament all this as 'overspecialization' will no doubt delight in noting that in 1962 only 253 contributors were needed to write more than 7,500 entries for the *IDB,* while thirty years later almost four times as many were needed to write 6,200 entries for the *ABD.* This is an honest reflection of the nature of biblical scholarship here in the final decades of the second millennium." Just so.

It may be the case in biblical studies that more and more are saying less and less to fewer and fewer. And yet, *ABD* is a delight, as any great dictionary must be. From Aaron to Zuzim (the people defeated by Chedorlaomer, as mentioned in Gen. 14:5) the *ABD* almost always instructs and frequently edifies. Major entries, such as Jesus Christ (Ben F. Meyer), Body (R. Eduard Schweizer), and Angels (Carol A. Newsom), are not inhibited from being affirmatively, even assertively, theological. Those who already have *IDB* may not feel the need to put out $360 for *ABD,* unless they really must stay on top of every new wrinkle in scholarship. (It is not self-evident that every generation needs a new bible dictionary.) Those who don't have *IDB,* however, might give serious thought to making the lifetime investment in *ABD,* especially if they have teaching responsibilities in the church. By contemporary standards, and considering the product, the price is by no means unreasonable.

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IN DISPRAISE OF PRAISE

We were recently within hearing range of a sermon in which it was proposed that one could not be reconciled to God unless he had entirely overcome his concern for the opinion of others. If this writer believed it, he would doubt his salvation. About the same time, as it happened, Prof. Ralph Potter of Harvard Divinity School sent along a bundle of materials he is using in a course there. It includes numerous reflections that may be familiar enough but bear re-reflection. For instance, Cicero's "In Defense of Archias": "We are all moved by a love of praise, and the best men are the most attracted by the idea of glory. The same philosophers who write books in which they urge a contempt for fame set their own names on the title page. In the very act of recording their scorn of eulogies and renown, they show their longing for such distinctions."

But the great Dr. Johnson let the imperatives of moral wisdom move him to run the risk of Cicero's jaded critique. For instance this from *The Rambler*: "Those who are oppressed by their own reputation will perhaps not be comforted by hearing that their cares are unnecessary. But the truth is that no man is much regarded by the rest of the world. He that considers how little he dwells upon the condition of others will learn how little the attention of others is attracted to himself. . . . The utmost which we can reasonably hope or fear is to fill a vacant hour with prattle, and be forgotten." Also from *The Rambler*: "When once a man has made celebrity necessary to his happiness, he has put it in the power of the weakest and most timorous malignity, if not to take away his satisfaction, at least to withhold it."

"All is vanity," wrote the Preacher, hoping no doubt that others would recognize the greatness of his insight. Inescapably it seems, ours is the ambition to slay the dragon of ambition, thereby enhancing its strength. The important thing is to recognize that it is a dragon, and that salvation does not depend upon our slaying it. And what does all this have to do with religion and public life? Do you really have to ask?

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DISCRIMINATING AGAINST FRIENDSHIPS

Most Americans, it seems fair to say, are only beginning to formulate appropriate responses to the insurgency of gay activism in our religious communities and in the general culture. With relatively few exceptions, people are strongly opposed to unjust discrimination and any form of "gay bashing." At the same time, the meaning of "discrimination" becomes maddeningly confused. Here is Msgr. William F. Murphy, writing in the Boston *Pilot* under the title "Friends for Life." His reflections strike us as both fresh and clarifying.

"Like you, I am blessed to have many friends. Some I see more often than others. Others I keep in touch with mostly by mail or an occasional telephone call. There are some, however, who have been my friends for almost all my life and, please God, will be till our last days. There are friends I go on vacation with. Some are priests I have lived with in seminary or in various residences for priests. Then there are families where I am as much at home as if it were my house, where I can spend a day or a week if I want. One friend jokes that we've been hanging around together for so long that it is no longer friendship. It's sloth. But joking aside, friendships like ours remain committed to one another and will remain that whatever may come along.

"Recently in our Commonwealth, however, we are being told that one certain kind of friendship should be legally recognized as more privileged than any other kind of friendship. This is the friendship that has become a 'lifestyle.' That lifestyle occurs when two homosexuals want to live together and thus become publicly recognized as 'domestic partners.' My question is a simple one: why should their friendship merit special benefits from the State while my friendships do not? What is it about their friendship that demands we grant their lifestyle the advantages the State gives to married couples? I am no less committed to my friends than they. I have in fact shared residences for many years with some of those friends to whom I am committed. What is the difference that gives them the right to demand that the state accord their lifestyle the status of married family life?

"The one obvious difference is that my friends and I do not engage in genital sexuality as an expression of our friendship. We may live together, but we don't sleep together. We may be committed to one another in lifelong friendship, but genital sexual activity (homosexual or heterosexual) is not the mark or the seal of the friendship. Nor need it be for any friendship. But is homosexual activity a reason to extend to 'domestic partners,' gay couples, the status of a family? Can we say that one who engages in genital sexual activity with a person of the same sex by that fact merits recognition by the State for benefits given to uphold married and family life? If that is so, what of the heterosexual male whose friendship with a

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woman leads him to express that friendship in genital sexuality? And what about us who don't do that but who are just as committed to our friends as anyone else (gay or straight) can be?

"It seems fairly clear that the proposition of 'domestic partner' makes no sense on examination unless you want the State to discriminate against me and my friends and all other friendships which do not fit this narrow category that makes homosexual activity and a certain lifestyle a sufficient norm to receive State benefits. It is also quite clear that what we are dealing with here is not the redress of some wrong but a political ploy by a vocal, well-financed, advantaged class in our society who want to force society to accept 'gay lifestyles' as normal, while at the same time taking advantage of the State by finagling money to support their friendship. This simply cannot be accepted by a sensible and sensitive society.

"Unjust discrimination is a reality in our society. The non-recognition of gay friendships as 'marriages' for the sake of receiving family benefits simply does not fall into this category. There is no unjust discrimination of me and my friends because the State refuses to accord us the status of family. There is not unjust discrimination against gay partners because the State refuses to accord the family status as well.

"What is, however, at stake in all this is something rather important. It is the fact that the State does have a legitimate interest in fostering the family for the good of a healthy society and its future. Therefore, while the State does not have to extend certain benefits to families, it is in the State's and society's best interest to do so. In this way the State gives a concrete message to all its citizens: marriage and family life constitute the vital cell of any society. The success of family life goes a long way toward guaranteeing the success of the public good.

"My friends who are gay, as well as my friends who are not, should all recognize this and see it as a good for us all. By recognizing this, we also make it a lot easier for us all to be united in real efforts to combat the unjust discrimination that is meted out to gays by the violence, the hatred, and the denial of civil and personal rights that gays still suffer in our communities. I do not want to have to be distracted from the effort to combat that kind of discrimination by having to defend family life against those who want to give special privileges to certain kinds of friendships."

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ALTERATION OF THE SOUL

It is a great favor that HarperCollins has reissued in paperback Simone Weil's *Waiting for God*, a wondrous collection left by this "modern saint" who died at age thirty-four in 1943. It has Leslie Fiedler's extensive 1951 introduction, which is sympathetic and intelligent, although one wishes he were not so insistent about her being "our kind of saint." There is something smug and self-satisfied about that. It betrays a preening and posturing, a display of "our alienation" that is supposedly just like hers. Saints whom we think are "our kinds of saints" are not saints, or we have completely misunderstood them. Saints are disturbing and offputting; they are "other," like the Other whom they have encountered, by whom they have been encountered, in a way that we do not understand and are perhaps afraid to try to understand. They are like Simone Weil.

She was a weird woman; weird and brilliant and possessed. And one must make a decision about whatever possessed her, whether it was inexpressible good or inexpressible evil. As she had to decide, and offered up her inability to decide to the good that revealed itself to her as God. She "identified" with the poor and suffering, giving up her advantages and near starving herself so that she would have no more than they. And she dissected ruthlessly the pride in such renunciation. She joined up with the right side, which is to say the left side, in the Spanish civil war and painfully worked her way through Marxism to the understanding that "revolution is the opiate of the people." The project of grand social transformation is "a trap of traps . . . an *ersatz* divinity . . . irremediably the domain of the devil." There is no love without justice, nor justice without love, she came to understand. In fact it is of the devil that people of "good will," and not a few Christians, claim that one must choose between love and justice, between compassion and systemic social change.

Her style is bold, paradoxical, and, almost certainly, intended to startle, to startle into thought, perhaps into prayer. For example: "Thus the existence of evil here below, far from disproving the reality of God, is the very thing that reveals him in his truth. On God's part creation is not an act of self-expansion but of restraint and renunciation. God and all his creatures are less than God alone. God accepted this diminution. He emptied a part of his being from himself. He had already emptied himself in this act of his divinity; that is why Saint John says that the Lamb had been slain from the beginning of the world. God permitted the existence of things distinct from himself and worth infinitely less than himself. By this creative act he denied

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himself, as Christ has told us to deny ourselves. God denied himself for our sakes in order to give us the possibility of denying ourselves for him. This response, this echo, which it is in our power to refuse, is the only possible justification for the folly of love in the creative act. . . . The religions that represent divinity as commanding wherever it has the power to do so seem false. Even though they are monotheistic they are idolatrous."

Simone Weil, *Waiting for God*, HarperCollins, 227 pages, $9 paper. To think, just $9 for a text that could alter your soul, as it has altered the souls of innumerable others.

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SOPHISTRY AND THE CULTURE OF DEATH

Writing in defense of assisted suicide and the notorious Dr. Jack Kevorkian who has helped dispatch a number of ladies in distress, Ernest van den Haag, a frequent contributor to *National Review*, descends, one regrets to say, to sophistry. In an article in the *Wall Street Journal* he trots out once again the tired claim that we are faced by a new situation because of the "modern-day advances in medical technology." These advances mean that we "can either prolong life beyond its 'natural' limits or facilitate its quick and painless end." It might come as a surprise to folk as diverse as Socrates, the Borgias, and Robert Maxwell that the achievement of the latter goal requires high-tech medicine. As to prolonging life, the relevant questions have been addressed in detail and with nuance in numerous forums, very recently in the Ramsey Colloquium statement "Always to Care, Never to Kill" (FT, February 1992, also published in the *Wall Street Journal*). Professor van den Haag, now retired from Fordham Law School, adds little or nothing to that discussion. He does join the Kevorkians and the enthusiasts of the Hemlock Society in injecting into the discussion several notions of a particularly pernicious character.

Our aversion to suicide, he writes, is historically based in religious belief. "God gave you life; it is his to take, not yours." But in van den Haag's world, "religious belief has eroded." To replace putatively outdated religious belief, van den Haag recommends the wisdom of the first-century Roman statesman, Seneca, who endorsed suicide as a way of escaping the "putrid or tottering edifice" of a life not worth living. The idea that religious belief is vestigial and should have no place in our public deliberations ill fits a society in which the overwhelming majority of people profess to be believers and assert that moral truth is derived, directly or indirectly, from the Judeo-Christian tradition. Why deliberation about laws dealing with life and death should in this democracy be guided by the wisdom of Seneca rather than by the wisdom of the Bible is not explained.

Van den Haag asserts that our attitudes toward suicide betray an irrational, or at least a nonrational, bias in favor of life. "Such assumptions about suicide arise because most of us prefer life and avoid death as long as possible. We do so not because life can be shown to be preferable, but because we are so constituted as to prefer living. But this fact does not show that life is preferable to death on empirical, analytical, or nonarbitrary moral grounds. Only that it is preferred." That life is no more than an arbitrary preference is the foundational assumption of what has aptly been termed the culture of death. It is certainly a very long way from what was held to be the self-evident truth that human beings "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

A few years ago some courts were tying themselves in knots over "wrongful life" suits—cases in which doctors were sued for not having aborted babies who would have been "better off dead." Courts are backing off from the "wrongful life" premise, having been forced to recognize the truly sweeping implications. The logic of van den Haag and those of like mind is that life is a good only because it is preferred and insofar as it is preferred. The a priori (as in "self-evident") premise of law and civilization is that life is a good—a good so great that one who unjustifiably takes a life may be required to forfeit his life. Of course the constituting truths of our law have been gravely undermined by a "right" to abortion that gives to private parties the power to kill the unborn without offering any justification whatever. In logic, attitude, law, and practice, the line from abortion to euthanasia and assisted suicide is obvious to all but the wilfully blind.

The fact that people prefer to live, says van den Haag, "does not show that life is preferable to death on empirical, analytical, or nonarbitrary moral grounds." That love is preferable to hatred, kindness to cruelty, and, for that matter, being to nonbeing are "preferences" equally difficult to defend by van den Haag's criteria. On "empirical" grounds one can likely demonstrate little more than that most people share these preferences. "Analytically," we might try to explain *why* they prefer as they do, but not that they *should* prefer as

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they do. And there are no "moral" grounds that cannot be, and in fact are not, dismissed as arbitrary by those who have a mind to do so.

On the other hand, van den Haag allows that "we are so constituted as to prefer living." One might put it differently and say that we prefer living because we are constituted for life. It would surely seem odd to say that we are constituted for the alternative to life, which is death. True, we are constituted so that we will die, but we are not constituted in order to die. In the view of Christians and most others, death is the entrance to a fuller life. It is a reasoned view that is no more "arbitrary" than its denial.

There is a superficial cleverness, which the superficially clever tend to mistake for profundity, in challenging a priori truths. Who sez so? Prove it! Such are the chants of undergraduates in Philosophy 101 who have stumbled upon the infinite possibilities of solipsism, moral and otherwise. Maybe good is bad and bad is good, and A really is non-A, and we don't mean the same things by the same words anyway. And thus do we end up with a moral and legal order based upon nothing but individual, and necessarily arbitrary, "preferences."

Equally bemusing is Professor van den Haag's assertion that "both the Hippocratic oath and religious belief enjoin physicians to prolong life under all circumstances." Of course neither the Hippocratic oath nor Christian and Jewish morality enjoins any such thing. They do forbid any act directly aimed at terminating an innocent human life. The author might read, for instance, the above-mentioned statement of the Ramsey Colloquium or, with regard to the Hippocratic oath, Leon Kass's magisterial *Toward a More Natural Science*. A modest familiarity with the pertinent literature does not seem too much to expect from professors who pronounce on questions of great moral moment.

Yet another idea has occurred to van den Haag. "Even Christian philosophers," he writes, "have approved of suicide committed to save or help other people, or of sacrificing one's life for the sake of ideas or beliefs. Thus martyrs are honored. However, suicide for non-altruistic reasons has been condemned." Sacrificing one's life for others or for beliefs thus becomes altruistic suicide. Never mind that suicide (*sui* + *-cide*) means to take one's own life, voluntarily and with that purpose in mind. At least that is what suicide meant until people started to play around with our culture's moral vocabulary. When we say that someone "died for his country" we do not mean that he committed suicide, altruistic or otherwise. The soldier who falls on a grenade does not do so with the intention of killing himself but of saving the lives of his fellows.

Of course "Christian philosophers"—in the sense of philosophers who happen to be Christian—have approved of many things. But the Christian tradition—as articulated by Scripture, the church fathers, and authoritative teachers through the centuries—is emphatically opposed to suicide. Those who "won the crown of martyrdom" were indeed venerated, as we should venerate the innumerable Christians who have died for the faith under the totalitarianisms of this century. But from the Montanists in the second century through today, enthusiasts who contrive in their own deaths are sharply condemned. In some actual cases the distinction may be blurred, but the principle is luminously clear: one is chosen to be a martyr, one does not choose martyrdom. An Ignatius of Antioch (d. 107) pleaded with the Christians not to intervene with the civil authorities to prevent his martyrdom not because he was intent upon suicide but because he was convinced that God was calling him to emulate in his death the death of his Lord.

The deeper perniciousness of the van den Haag argument (an argument, to be fair, that is by no means original with him) is that the martyrs, along with soldiers fallen in battle, were simply exercising their "preference." Upon examination, altruistic suicide turns out to be an oxymoron. It is not altruistic at all; it is not for others but for the satisfaction of one's own preferences. Van den Haag may accurately be paraphrased thusly: "Some people prefer courage and self-sacrifice to cowardice and self-preservation. They do so not because courage can be shown to be preferable, but because they are so constituted as to prefer it. But this fact does not show that courage is preferable to cowardice on empirical, analytical, or nonarbitrary moral grounds. Only that it is preferred."

Once the a priori knowledge of the good of life is denied, it follows that the reality of virtue is also denied. All that is left is the raw "fact" of people acting upon their individual preferences. In going to the cross, Jesus was, not to put too fine a point on it, just doing his own thing. The cross of Christ and the suicide machine of Dr. Kevorkian are morally conflated. After all, the women he helped to dispatch probably thought that they were doing what was best also for their families and friends, thus giving their action some claim to being "altruistic suicide" in the noble tradition of the martyrs.

The Athenian sophists came into deserved disrepute for their skilfully skeptical production of superficially plausible arguments that made chaos of reason and morality. There will always be a market for sophistry where people want to rationalize the doing of wrong by calling evil good and good evil. In the encroaching culture of death,

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Orwell's "Newspeak" chatters on about quality of life, wrongful life, and altruistic suicide. Others, against the darkness, will persist in speaking of self-evident truths. They cannot "prove" these truths to the satisfaction of the implacably skeptical, but they know, on the basis of massive historical evidence, the consequences when these truths are denied. They do not "prefer" these truths; they are persuaded that they are true. Even Seneca knew that much.

FT

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ Mother Teresa is a "religious imperialist," according to Germaine Greer, a guru whose mainly feminist intellectual gyrations are almost always described as bold. "At my convent school," writes Greer, "the pious nuns who always spoke softly and inclined their heads with a small, patient smile were the ones to fear. They became the mothers superior. Mother Teresa is not content with running a convent; she runs an order of Mother Teresa clones, which operates world-wide. In anyone less holy, this would be seen as an obscene ego trip." Being "holy," however, makes Mother Teresa all the more hateful. She takes advantage of these dying people by telling them about Jesus. Greer concludes, "Mother Teresa epitomizes for me the blinkered charitableness upon which we pride ourselves and for which we expect reward in this world and the next. There is very little on earth that I hate more than I hate that." Keep Ms. Greer in mind the next time someone tells you that Mother Teresa is a universally admired icon of goodness. One must not forget the forces that, from the beginning, have hated the light.

■ A university economist, much devoted to mathematical models that allegedly explain human behavior, was expounding his theory to a colleague in the divinity school. He went on at some length, giving elaborate illustrations, until the theologian interrupted with, "Yes, yes, but what does all this have to do with reality?" "Ah yes, reality," responded the economist. "Reality is a special case."

■ The various Eastern Orthodox communities in the U.S. have been going through some painful reexaminations in determining how best to relate to the American reality. The Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops in America (SCOBA), which includes a confusing array of jurisdictions, has recently decided to rejoin the National Council of Churches (NCC), an otherwise oldline Protestant body, after suspending membership for a time in protest against the NCC's liberal excesses. Fr. Alexander Webster of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) urged the Orthodox to stay out, asserting that the NCC needed the Orthodox more than the other way around, and he no doubt had a point. At the same time, other Orthodox believe that they need the NCC connection in order to negotiate their modest place in our society's religious order, or disorder, as the case more often is. (While it is often claimed that there are about five million Orthodox in the U.S., some observers suggest that there are probably no more than one million active members.) These complexities are usefully analyzed by Fr. Anthony Ugolnik of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America, writing in the *Christian Century*. He concludes with this appeal to Protestant oldliners, and especially to those in positions of academic leadership: "The Eastern Orthodox churches have been virtually invisible in the theological academy in the U.S. Seminaries failed to add Orthodox professors, theological perspectives, or classes to their curricula. Orthodox candidates for faculty positions are routinely passed over in favor of less-troublesome minorities. The synchronic approach to the diversity we seek, especially as embodied in gender and race, vastly overshadows the diachronic view of diversity, especially as embodied in us, the Eastern counterpart to your very Western Christian tradition. Thus if we seem defensive to you, there is at least some justice to our claim that you have made us so. Our 'suspension' of ecumenical activity may be, in the last analysis, but a warning of a growing estrangement from you, and of you from your own history. I often suspect, in my darkest moments, that if the Orthodox do withdraw from dialogue with Protestants, few of you will know, and few of you will care. By all means, challenge us. But get to know us first."

■ Our friend James Finn, former editor of *Freedom Review*, recently fell into a gathering of the very politically correct. There he was instructed, inter alia, that the handicapped are always to be referred to as the "differently abled" who are "physically challenged." Disruptive kids are those who have a "reputation disorder." And so on through the revisionist lexicon of the p.c. Our friend Finn is no slouch when it comes to picking up on possibilities. He writes: "In a flash, as it were, I saw how to close the gap between rich and poor in our society, in fact, how to get rid of the gap entirely. I perceived that there are no more rich and poor people, simply those who are differently moneyed and differently propertied. And some who are monetarily challenged. And those accused of disrupting our system by fraud, corruption, and worse are simply 'reputation disordered.'"

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■ Peter Toon, a British Anglican, has written *Knowing God Through Liturgy* ($12.95, The Prayer Book Society, Box 268, Largo, FL 34649). It is a thoughtful critique of what has gone wrong, in liturgy and much else, in the Episcopal Church in the U.S. Toon seems a very apt name for someone writing on worship. As apt as the names of the two officers listed on the stationery of The Prayer Book Society. Liberal critics claim that the conservative society would chain the church to the past and is obsessed with legalistic notions of what ought and ought not be done. The two officers are the Reverends Robert A. Shackles and John L. Ott.

■ There are, or so we are told, still those who look to the Brits for a more sophisticated view of the world. In the course of reviewing a book on the New Age movement, that eminent journal *The Economist* offers a brief summary of the history of Christianity: "Some members of the organized churches are so bothered about New Age ideas that they ascribe them to Satan. What if the New Agers did what the Christians did? They were the Bolsheviks of religion. They swept to power, as Lenin did, by rallying the drifting millions who were waiting for someone to give orders. They took over the pagan rites and festivals, modifying them as necessary and claiming them as their own; but fiercely proscribing anything that contradicted their teaching, condemning it as immoral, and, if pursued, heretical and to be burnt from the earth. That is how you impose your will for 2,000 years."

■ The redoubtable Elizabeth Kristol, no stranger to readers of this journal, reviews Harold Bloom's *The American Religion* in *The American Spectator.* (The combination fits, for Bloom is surely a spectator when it comes to American religion.) Kristol writes: "In the face of so much alien behavior Bloom falls back on what he knows best: literary criticism. Indeed, he boasts that he has 'read and reread everything that remotely could be considered to be an American religious text.' So truncated is his secular, professorial worldview that he genuinely convinces himself that a religious faith is the sum of its writings; reading Bloom on the subject of religion is like reading a restaurant critic who only evaluates menus."

■ Princeton University may seem like an unlikely place for it, but that is where it happened—a four-day symposium on the twentieth anniversary of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. Papers and other materials from the conference are now available in *Trust the Truth*, a 384-page book published by the Pope John Center (186 Forbes Road, Braintree, MA 02184, $17.95 plus $2 shipping). 1993 is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the encylical on human sexuality and contraception. For a quarter-century, *Humanae Vitae* has been widely challenged or ignored in Catholic academic theology and parochial practice. *Trust the Truth* and plans for the observance of the twenty-fifth are among the indications that a reconsideration may be underway.

■ Please note that a complete index of this journal, from the premier issue of March 1990 through December 1992, is now available. It includes subjects addressed, books reviewed, and contributors. The index is available for $8, including postage and handling, from the editorial offices.

■ "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity," Paul explains to Timothy. But timidity is the spirit evinced by these guidelines issued by the legal offices of sundry churches in election years. Of course churches must be concerned about protecting their tax exempt status, but some churches are so intimidated by the IRS that they impose all kinds of restrictions upon themselves, far beyond what is required by law. One Catholic source is so nervous that it urges diocesan papers not to print columnists of a pronounced liberal or conservative bias, lest the IRS interpret that as political partisanship. By way of contrast, the legal counsel of the National Right to Life Committee has put out a very sensible set of guidelines, noting, inter alia, that individual clergy are free to do just about anything they want politically, including endorsing candidates. Churches, which have a 501 (c)(3) exemption, are another story. In some churches—in most black churches, for example—there is a longstanding tradition of clergy endorsing candidates and engaging in other forms of partisan activism. It is a bad idea, in our judgment, but not because it jeopardizes tax exemption. It is a bad idea because it jeopardizes the message and mission of the church. The more the ministry is identified with one political option, the less believably it is able to witness to the Gospel that keeps all political options under transcendent judgment. Admittedly, there is a fine line between bearing clear witness on questions of great moral moment (e.g., abortion) and political partisanship. But it is a line we should try hard to maintain, not because we fear the IRS but because we fear compromising the integrity of the Gospel. Maintaining that line, however, does not require the extremes of self-censorship urged by hyper-cautious lawyers in some church legal offices. (For the NRLC guidelines, send $3 to Legal Office, National Right to Life Committee, 419 Seventh Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20004-2293.)

■ It seems the Hemlock Society wants to distance itself from the bad press surrounding its founder, the infamous Mr. Humphry, who killed his first

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wife and abandoned his second when she was dying of cancer. Board member Sidney Rosoff says "the society is embarking upon a whole new period of thoughtful consideration." So they have chosen a new executive director, the Rev. John Pridonoff, a Congregational minister. "My God is a God of love," declares Mr. Pridonoff. It follows, according to this report in the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, that his god is very much in favor of euthanasia. "Pridonoff, who relaxes with classical music and his dog at a Rose Canyon condominium, conceded the Bible teaches that suicide is a sin. 'But there are a lot of things in the Bible we have grown beyond as a society,' he said." One is not inclined to argue with that, although one might choose a word other than "grown."

■ When it works so well, do it again. So there will be a second two-week seminar on "The Free Society and *Centesimus Annus*" in Liechtenstein next July. The same faculty: Rocco Buttiglione, Michael Novak, George Weigel, Richard John Neuhaus. Fellowships are available for ten American graduate students. Send curriculum vitae and 300-word essay on liberty to Derek Cross, American Enterprise Institute, 1150 Seventeenth Street, NW, Washington D.C. 20036. Application deadline is February 1, 1993.

■ Mario Cuomo of New York has been, for certain Catholics, the model of the morally and religiously reflective politician. Eugene Kennedy, psychologist and former priest, has been in the forefront of the Governor's admirers. "I must admit," writes Kennedy in a column that appears in some diocesan papers, "that I have looked for reasons, sometimes stretching like a first baseman for a wild throw, to defend Governor Cuomo." Cuomo's more recent statements have changed that for Kennedy. For instance, at the Democratic convention last summer, Cuomo told the delegates "exactly what they wanted to hear: that support of legal abortion is the only acceptable position on an issue that once seemed to trouble the governor deeply." In the view of Cuomo and other Democrats, Kennedy writes, "The object of choice is subordinated totally to the act of choice." Kennedy asks: "Has Cuomo committed himself and his influence to a political position which effectively silences the voices of the Catholic tradition from which he came and to which the Democratic Party has owed so much for so many generations? If so, this tells Catholics that their secularization is now taken for granted, that the beliefs of their Church are considered to inspire them so little that they can be ignored completely by politicians aspiring to office in America." And he concludes: "One thing is very clear. Gov. Cuomo has taken himself out of the running for the Thomas More mantle of conscience-above-power in public service. And those of us who have always tried to find reasons to explain and defend him as a model Catholic will find that the reach involved now exceeds our grasp."

■ "Telling the Truth: A Report on the State of the Humanities in Higher Education" is an extremely valuable sixty-page document published by the National Endowment for the Humanities. It carefully reports the ideological terrorism, commonly called political correctness, that is so dominant on the campuses, but also points to heartening instances of people in administrations, faculties, and student bodies who are demonstrating considerable courage in trying to restore the university as a place of honest inquiry. Especially those readers in higher education might want to obtain a copy by writing the National Endowment at 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20004.

■ Like all universities that we know of, the University of Virginia has a student activities fund to which all students contribute. The fund supports, inter alia, a host of student publications, but not a publication called *Wide Awake*. Because, says the university, that publication is a "religious activity." In the pertinent guidelines, a religious activity is defined as "an activity which primarily promotes or manifests a particular belief in or about a deity or an ultimate reality." The editors of *Wide Awake* started their magazine because they believed the existing student publications did not give adequate attention to Christianity or Christian viewpoints on issues of general concern. The editors went to court, lost, and are now in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. The plaintiffs' brief in *Rosenberger v. the University of Virginia* is submitted by Michael W. McConnell of the University of Chicago Law School and a valued contributor to this journal, and by Michael P. McDonald of the Center for Individual Rights in Washington, D.C. "The district court," they write in summation, "has needlessly created a conflict between the Establishment Clause and other provisions of the Constitution, including free speech, free press, free exercise, and equal protection. The various clauses of the First Amendment are not so poorly drafted or so strangely incompatible that enforcement of one requires violation of another." They urge that the appeals court rule that the university should administer the student activities fund in a neutral way, without discriminating either for or against religion in general or any religion in particular. It is, in our judgment, a convincing and important argument. The decision of the district court reflects the way in which religion, constitutionally accorded a privileged position, has become a

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disability in any activity touched by state power. That decision should be reversed.

■ "Orthodox Voices" bills itself as "the quarterly Orthodox Christian magazine on cassette," and will be of interest to those who want to learn about Eastern Orthodox teaching and practice. There are also tapes dealing with current developments in Russia and elsewhere. For information write Orthodox Voices, P.O. Box 23644, Lexington, KY 40523.

■ John Updike reviewing John Cheever's *Journals*: "His confessions posthumously administer a Christian lesson on the dark gulf between outward appearance and inward condition; they present, with an almost unbearable fullness, a post-Adamic man, an unreconciled bundle of cravings and complaints, whose consolations—the glory of the sky, the company of his young sons—have the ring of hollow cheer in the vastness of his dissatisfaction. Comparatively, the journals of Kierkegaard and Emerson are complacent and generalizing."

■ This writer is grateful for his Macintosh Plus, as for the Kaypro on which he began. It is hard to imagine going back to a typewriter, but neither have we been able to muster much enthusiasm for those who want to electronically wire the universe on the apparent assumption that facility of communications will somehow be attended by improved quality of what is communicated. But maybe we just don't get it. Anyway, we promised to pass on the information that Bill Gram-Reefer has a "Worldview BBS" computer program that proposes, if we understand it, to put the entire Christian world "on line." Computerphiles may wish to contact him by old-fashioned mail at 2069 Highland Dr., Concord, CA 94520.

■ In the lingering debates over the justice of the Gulf War, one comes across these curious constructions of what is meant by "proportionality" in just war doctrine. According to that doctrine, proportionality has to do chiefly with the relationship between ends and means, whether the cost is proportionate to the goal achieved. But in a prestigious foreign affairs journal a noted scholar recently argued that proportionality requires a rough equality between combatants. To meet that criterion, the U.S. and its allies should presumably have denied themselves the use of the air power that Iraq lacked. Such a proposal, it should be needless to say, is utterly alien to just war doctrine. At a more popular level, there is this odd but recurring idea that something was radically wrong with the war because so few Americans died in it. Thus John Chancellor on "NBC Nightly News": "Greenpeace, the public interest organization, believes that the Iraqi death toll, civilian and military, before and after the war, may be as high as 198,000. Allied military dead are counted in the low hundreds. The disparity is huge and somewhat embarrassing. And that's commentary for this evening, Tom." Greenpeace is hardly just a public interest organization, and its estimate of fatalities is considered wildly exaggerated by most experts. But the really interesting implication is that, if allied dead had totaled, say, 50,000, the outcome of the war would be less "embarrassing." One supposes that this, too, has something to do with proportionality. Justice requires roughly equal consequences for good guys and bad guys. This is the fairness doctrine run amok.

■ It seems that in the Washington suburb of Prince William County, parishioners at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton report seeing statues of the Virgin Mary weeping. This occasioned a discussion of miracles and religious experience in general in the pages of the *Washington Post*. The reporter, Laura Sessions Stepp, sought counsel from research psychologist Jared Kass of Lesley College Graduate School in Cambridge, Mass. "There is a lot of evidence now that someone can have a religious experience and not show any symptoms of pathology," said Dr. Kass. We are greatly relieved.

Sources: Sister Canice Connors in *America*, May 9, 1992; Episcopal priest in the *New York Times*, October 7, 1992; other Protestant clergy in *National and International Religion Report*, October 5, 1992. Maggie Gallagher on single motherhood, *New York Times*, September 24, 1992. William F. Murphy's "Friends for Life" in the Boston *Pilot*, September 18, 1992. Ernest van den Haag defense of physician-assisted suicide in the *Wall Street Journal*, October 13, 1992. Germaine Greer on Mother Teresa, *The Independent* (London), September 1990. Anthony Ugolnik on Eastern Orthodox communities in the U.S., *Christian Century*, June 17-24, 1992. James Finn on political correctness in *Freedom Review*, May-June 1992. On New Age religion, *The Economist*, February 15, 1992. Elizabeth Kristol on Harold Bloom, *The American Spectator*, August 1992. On God and euthanasia, *San Diego Union-Tribune*, August 28, 1992. Eugene Kennedy on Mario Cuomo, *The Catholic Messenger*, July 30, 1992. John Updike on John Cheever's *Journals* in *The New Republic*, December 2, 1991. John Chancellor on Gulf War casualties, "NBC Nightly News," March 12, 1992. Jared Kass quoted on religious experience, *Washington Post*, March 11, 1992.

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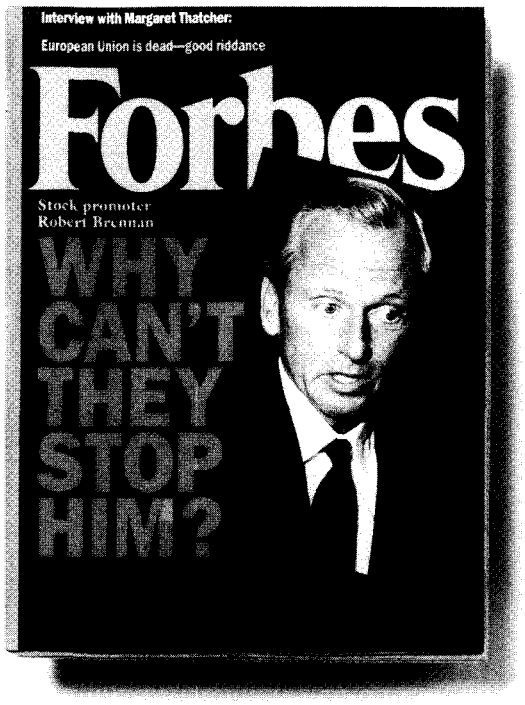

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